

Piedmont Unified School District

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Education

From: Randall Booker, Superintendent
Cheryl Wozniak, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Date: September 8, 2017

Subject: **Presentation on District Training on Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice**

I. BACKGROUND

In June, the School Board adopted the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), our District's strategic plan. The LCAP is a three-year plan that describes the goals, actions, services, and expenditures that will support positive student outcomes and address state and locally defined priorities.

Piedmont Unified has identified social emotional well-being of students as its first priority. Goal 1 of our LCAP states: *All students will feel physically safe, emotionally cared for, and academically and socially included in their school environment.* The first three actions in goal 1 describe our work related to equity, diversity, and social justice. Action 1 describes our goals for the professional development work with staff. Action 2 describes our goals for partnerships with parents and the broader Piedmont community. Action 3 describes our goals for student education and intervention.

LCAP Goal 1: All students will feel physically safe, emotionally cared for, and academically and socially included in their school environment.

1.1 Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice Professional Development for Staff

1.1a Develop a multi-year plan for training all staff on how to become aware of, seek out, and eliminate systemic barriers that prevent the realization of a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment for all

1.1b Work with organizations and consultant services who provide trainings on how to create school cultures that value and respect all individuals and serve all groups, regardless of protection by law, including but not limited to groups identified by: age, appearance, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, visible or invisible disabilities

1.1c Explore the use of culturally responsive teaching practices as an instructional approach to integrating students' unique cultural strengths within the curriculum

1.2 Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice Partnerships and Community Engagement

1.2a Partner with local organizations to advance the work related to equity, diversity, and social justice within Piedmont Schools and throughout the city of Piedmont

1.2b Engage parent and community support groups in discussions about membership, participation, and their organization's mission through the lens of equity, diversity, and social justice

1.3 Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice Student Education and Intervention

1.3a Educate and model for students the importance of being an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful community of people who value others for their varying human characteristics, ideas, cultural practices, belief systems, worldviews, identities, experiences, and demographic differences

1.3b Teach students appropriate ways to advocate for and speak up on behalf of themselves and others who face bias, discrimination, and exclusion from activities that prevent them from reaching their full potential

1.3c Research restorative practices to complement or serve as an alternative to traditional approaches to discipline

II. SUPPORT INFORMATION

To launch the equity, diversity, and social justice work, the District hired Sara Wicht, from Teaching Tolerance, to lead a full week of training from August 7-11 on the Social Justice Standards/Anti-Bias Framework. Dr. Cheryl Wozniak, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, will present an overview of the weeklong training.

Below is Ms. Wicht's bio, along with a description of the training for each day of the week. Embedded in the description are links providing additional information about Teaching Tolerance and the Social Justice Standards.

Bio: Sara Wicht, Presenter

Sara Wicht has over 20 years of experience in K-12 education. Her work in social justice and anti-bias education includes expertise in instructional practice, teacher mentoring, professional development, curriculum design and educational publishing in the United States and Brazil. Wicht holds an MaED in Language and Literacy, a BA in English and certification in secondary education from Hamline University, St. Paul, MN.

As the senior manager of Teaching and Learning with Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Wicht led content development on the award winning viewer's guide to Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot and Perspectives for a Diverse America, a K-12, literacy-based, anti-bias curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards as well as the publications Beyond the Bus and Let's Talk: Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics with Students. She is a contributing writer on Teaching Tolerance's Social Justice Standards, Code of Conduct: A Guide to Responsive Discipline, Civil Rights Done Right and Teaching Tolerance's The March Continues: Five Essential Practices for Teaching the Movement.

Since 2012, Wicht has facilitated professional development on anti-bias education at national conference events hosted by the National Council for Teachers of English, National Council for Social Studies, Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color, National Association of Multicultural Educators, Association of Middle Level Educators, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, American School Counselor Association, Human Rights Campaign and the National Coalition on School Diversity. Most recently, she provided in-person professional development for Global Islam and Arts Teacher Fellows through the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and for Chicago-area educators at the IL Holocaust Museum and Education Center on "Confronting Bias and Facilitating Difficult Conversations" and provided content for the America Divided Viewer's Guide.

Wicht's master's thesis, How does the explicit instruction of a multiple lens through literature affect reader response to text? (2007) was awarded the Beulah Benton Tatum award for research in multicultural issues, and she is the recipient of the 2015 Adam Solomon Award for Excellence from the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, NY.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE STANDARDS WEEK OF TRAINING

August 7 from 8:30-3:30 in the PHS Student Center: Administrators, counselors, and psychologists will receive a one-day intensive training on the [social justice standards](#) published by [Teaching Tolerance](#). This training will introduce us to the 4 pillars of the SJ standards: identity, diversity, justice, and action. The standards have been developed for students K-12 and are grouped in bands: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12. The text highlighted below in blue is a summary of the two days of training provided by Sara Wicht, the consultant providing the training. Note that the two days will be compacted into one for administrators, given the principals are unable to be in two full days of training on the Thursday and Friday before opening their school sites.

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Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework

Although our K-12 students across the country are more diverse than they have ever been, many of our schools and classrooms are more segregated than they were prior to the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, KS decision. The work we have done in prejudice reduction requires the inclusion of recognizing injustice and developing skills in collective action. Further, commonly held beliefs and biases influence an educator's ability to be responsive to all students. This workshop engages participants in personal reflection as they explore strategies for facilitating difficult conversations, plan student-centered instruction and investigate ways to include prejudice reduction and collective action in academic goals.

Designed for K-12 educators of all subjects, support staff, administrators and counselors, this two-day PD uses the first-of-its-kind social justice standards and equips educators with language and tools to infuse the exploration of identity, diversity, justice and action into prejudice reduction and collective action. Participants will receive use-tomorrow strategies and resources for lesson planning and policy setting and tools to establish practices that foster inclusive school climates.

Part One: Reflect on personal assumptions and implicit bias and identify strategies and resources to help students explore their own identities and the identities of others. Explore the big picture work in cultural proficiency through a set of critical practices in anti-bias education to help effectively implement culturally responsive components into individual practice. Unpack the Social Justice Standards and explore ways the SJS is currently being used in classrooms and schools across the country.

Part Two: Identify ways to integrate the Social Justice Standards within school policy and procedure and classroom practice. Using the tools from Part One, this session is designed to help educators take action and create the conditions that foster equity and inclusion across their school community.

Objectives:

- Describe the goals of anti-bias education
- Build and draw upon intergroup awareness, understanding and skills
- Understand the importance of diverse experiences as well as the importance of shared experiences and solidarity
- Integrate identity, diversity, justice and action into classroom and school policy and practice

August 8th and 9th from 8:30-3:30: English language arts teachers, history-social science teachers, and teacher librarians will be trained on curriculum, [Perspectives for a Diverse America](#), published by Teaching Tolerance, which incorporates the social justice standards into the Common Core Literacy Standards.

Perspectives for a Diverse America , a K-12 Anti-bias, Literacy-based Curriculum Audience: K-12 English Language Arts and Social Studies Classroom Teachers

Part One: Perspectives for a Diverse America is a comprehensive, literacy-based K- 12 curriculum that provides students the opportunity to engage deeply in meaningful texts, allowing them to read, discuss, write about and critique ideas from four unique anti-bias perspectives: identity, diversity, justice, and action. The Perspectives anthology provides students with windows into others’ realities as well as mirrors that reflect their experiences and underscore the interconnectedness of our personal, familial and community identities.

This interactive workshop highlights research and best practices that underscore the importance of culturally responsive content and meaningful literacy experiences for all students. Participants will tour the suite of online resources within the curriculum tool; including a multi-media, multi-genre anthology of rigorous anti-bias texts that meet the demands of text complexity. Using a flexible web-based and interactive platform and backward planning, teachers will learn how to assemble lesson plans using the meaningful and rigorous texts, strategies and tasks that include options for differentiation and authentic assessment. Learn how to match content and strategies that empower students and teachers to engage with a new kind of literacy experience—one that includes both prejudice reduction and collective action.

Part Two: Using existing lesson plans and scope and sequence, participants will integrate elements of Perspectives for a Diverse America into their instruction and create two to three full learning plans for use in their classroom. Participants will apply diverse text selection tool to current content and use the Perspectives text anthology to fill gaps in existing resources to ensure curricular materials are both reflective of the students they serve and of the rich diversity of the world.

Objectives:

- Describe the goals of anti-bias education and apply them to practice
- Explore the Perspectives central text anthology and practice diverse text selection
- Explore literacy-based instructional strategies and assessment tasks and explain their alignment with academic standards and critical literacy
- Integrate Perspectives into authentic planning and practice

August 10th from 8:30-3:00: ALL classified staff (paraeducators, district office and school office staff, custodians, maintenance, library assistants, technology staff, and food service staff) and certificated staff who don't teach ELA or history-social science are invited to receive training on the social justice standards.

August 11th from 8:30-3:30: Day 2 is a continuation of the training provided for certificated staff. There will be a separate afternoon training for paraeducators led by Ina Bendich and Cory Wechsler, two restorative justice consultants who worked with the Havens staff in 2016-17.

II. RECOMMENDATION: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

This is the first presentation on the equity work the District laid out in its Local Control Accountability Plan. The School Board will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback to inform further actions related to equity, diversity, and social justice.