

Mid-Year Board Report

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February 2018

Equity > Inclusion > Social Justice



Goal #1

Provide leadership for equity and opportunity to ensure coordinated and aligned efforts from birth through college and career with specific attention to underserved and underperforming students in Washtenaw County.

EARLY LITERACY 0-3RD GRADE

The Study of Early Literacy (SOEL) is a network of educators focused on developing teachers' deep knowledge of best practices in literacy instruction. This year-long learning experience ensures support while teachers use these practices with their students. The professional learning is done through book studies, teacher-action research, and working with experts in the field of early literacy. The WISD hosted a variety of early literacy professionals including Notre Dame professor, Dr. Ernest Morrell, University Musical Society/Kennedy Center Teaching Artist, Imani Gonzalez, and U-M professor, Dr. Gina Cervetti.



The network conducted two summer institutes in July and August, adding 80 educators to the network for a total of 120 educators engaged in this study. The group is comprised of classroom teachers, literacy coaches, interventionists, speech and language pathologists, and special educators across five districts in Washtenaw County and four in Livingston County.



SOEL is organized into three cohorts chosen to align to the WISD equity, inclusion, and social justice emphasis and to continue anchoring SOEL in the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy. SOEL 1 concentrates on deliberate and research-informed efforts to foster literacy motivation and engagement within and across lessons. SOEL 2 focuses on an equitable, inclusive and holistic approach to teaching reading in small groups and individual instruction. SOEL 3 focuses on an equitable, inclusive and holistic approach to research and standards-aligned writing instruction.

The SOEL model was recently presented at the 2018 MASA conference as a [Teacher Professional Learning Model for Instruction, Coaching, and Assessment in Early Literacy](#).

WASHTENAW MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

Washtenaw County My Brother's Keeper has entered the second phase of focused work around young men of color, identified as "WMBK 2.0." This phase of work will better enable WMBK to provide leadership for equity and opportunity surrounding boys and young men of color in the county.

This transitional process was marked by the following events, engagement, and changes:

- WMBK established a 3-year agreement and memorandum of understanding between Washtenaw County Government and Washtenaw Intermediate School District.
- WMBK secured 3-year financial commitments from Washtenaw County Government, WISD, Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office, and Ypsilanti Community Schools.
- WMBK created a preliminary outline of metrics to be used to measure the initiative's success.
- WMBK hired its third Americorps VISTA member, who is tasked with further developing and leading Young Brothers (WMBK Youth Council).
 - To date, youth council mentors (college-aged men of color primarily at Eastern University) have met to establish a large curriculum agenda: literacy, money and time management, business etiquette, and relationships and respect.



- The mentors will meet with young men of color at Ypsilanti Community High School, beginning in February.

WISD hired Tabitha Bentley to assume the role of Director of Strategy for WMBK. Tabitha will provide strategic direction and vision for WMBK, as well as facilitate leadership, steering, and advisory teams for WMBK.

Fall accomplishments include:

- Attending and documenting three post-meetings with men of color from the See the Vision, Be the Vision effort. Meeting notes highlight pressing issues for men of color and will be used to solidify future WMBK efforts.
- Participation in the October state MBK Summit - Young, Political, and Powerful. The summit participants conversed about ways the emerging MBK communities can support youth leadership.
- Actively involved in planning for the Summer '18 youth employment program.



JUSTICE LEADERS AND YOUTH DIVERSITY FORUMS

This year we have expanded our professional learning opportunities for educators seeking support in the areas of equity, inclusion, and social justice and created a pathway for growing and sustaining Diversity Councils for our high school students.



We are offering three new cohorts of the Justice Leaders: Core Course, a 4-day intensive professional learning series for educators who are passionate about EISJ and want to make personal and professional changes. The first two cohorts are comprised of 70 participants from across the county. Participants are teachers,

administrators, superintendents, and paraprofessionals from Saline, Ypsilanti, Dexter, Ann Arbor, WEOC, WAVE, Lincoln, and Milan. In addition, we are offering a 3rd cohort specifically for WISD employees. The 21 participants are from nine various departments.

This year we will launch the Justice Leaders: Advanced Course for educators who have completed the Core Course and want to continue to make their practice more socially just. The two Advanced Courses will begin in February, and currently, there are 60 educators signed up for the 4-day series. In subsequent years, we plan to continue offering the Core Course for new educators, the Advanced Course, and adding a Train-the-Trainers Course. All the Advanced Course graduates will be invited to participate in the Justice League—a group of educators who meet quarterly to sustain themselves and advance their EISJ practice.

This year marked the 6th Annual WISD Youth Diversity Forum. The forum took place over three days in partnership with the Neutral Zone. Every high school program in the county was invited to participate. Students met diverse peers from across the county and discussed social identities, environmental racism and the Flint water crisis, and Christopher Columbus and the silencing of Native Americans. Students and teachers from 17 programs participated.



In addition to the Annual Youth Diversity Forum, we returned to supporting school-based Diversity Councils in partnership with the Neutral Zone. Five schools- Ann Arbor Skyline H.S., Dexter H.S., Saline H.S., Lincoln H.S., and WIHI-applied and were accepted to be a part of our Diversity Council network. These schools will participate in two additional forums and will receive site visits from Neutral Zone staff

to help them create projects to affect change in their schools. Our vision is to continue growing this work so that every high school in the county has a strong group of students working on issues of equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Finally, the EISJ Film Series for Educators and Community debuted in February. We will screen four films at the WISD, followed by community conversations.

ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR TEAM

During the 2016/2017 school year, the Washtenaw Superintendents' Association formed a workgroup to investigate the growing need for support around challenging student behavior, particularly students with emotional impairments and on the autism spectrum. In accordance with the recommendation of this workgroup and the approval of the county superintendents, an Academic/Behavior (AB) Team was hired in August 2017. The team consists of a School Social Worker, a Speech and Language Therapist, two Teacher Consultants (one with experience with students with emotional impairments and one with experience with students on the autism spectrum), a General Education Teacher, and a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst.



The AB Team's mission is to assist local districts in targeting strategies and interventions to support students in the least restrictive environment. In addition to direct support for individual students, the AB Team helps to make the classroom environment accessible to all students.

Since September, this team has:

- Created the process and forms local districts use to access support from the AB Team.
- Met with every local special education director and district team.
- Developed and presented individualized professional development to local teams.
- Received 15 requests from local district teams for support. Currently, eight referrals are in different stages of the process.

IMPLEMENTATION OF BIRTH TO THREE MICHIGAN MANDATORY SPECIAL EDUCATION (MMSE) SERVICES:

In June 2017, the Washtenaw Superintendents' Association (WSA) agreed to transition countywide special education services for children ages birth to three from the LEAs to WISD. Eight districts agreed to the transition. Ann Arbor Public Schools opted to maintain their programming staff. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with AAPS which agrees that AAPS staff will continue to provide service delivery, but WISD will provide program coordination, professional development for AAPS staff, and WISD and AAPS will implement a single countywide system utilizing the Primary Service Provider model.



Hiring the new WISD Early Intervention team has been very successful. Loretta Tobolski-Horn has been hired as WISD's new Early Intervention Coordinator and is splitting her time between WISD and AAPS. In addition, the EI team now includes two home visitors, two early intervention teachers, four speech-language pathologists, two physical therapists, two occupational therapists, and two social workers.

The transition of existing caseloads from eight local districts will be complete by June 2018. We are already seeing an increase in countywide caseloads due to the number of referrals and evaluation improvements as families are now able to access a single countywide service system.

MENTAL HEALTH

Over the past six months, Washtenaw ISD and Washtenaw Alliance for Children and Youth (WACY) have collaborated with Washtenaw County (WC) Community Mental Health and U-M Depression Center to provide numerous networking and professional learning sessions. This work grew out of a request from the Washtenaw County Guidance Counselors' Association to support their spring summit. It was so well attended that the leadership asked for additional sessions to be offered during the 2017-18 school year. A planning committee worked over the summer to prioritize speakers and content which rolled-out in the fall of 2017. School social workers in the county took notice and have asked to engage with this work and for WISD/WACY to support them through activities like the creation of a listserv and a planning committee. Samples of content include the following:

- SafeTALK Training/U-M Depression Center trainer: SafeTALK prepares anyone over age 15 to become a suicide-alert helper.
- LGBTQ 101 & Local Resources: Ozone House trainers review the emerging needs of this community, along with resources and support.
- Cybersafety & Cyberbullying: Washtenaw Area Council for Children (WACC) staff shared classroom presentations, assemblies, peer group programming, and a new online module they offer to our local schools.
- Youth Mental Health First Aide: WC Community Mental Health trainer taught people to give "first aid" to those individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and/or who are in the early stages of a mental health disorder.
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy: This is a 5-day session and is the treatment of choice for individuals who suffer from suicidal and non-suicidal self-injurious behavior.
- Critical Incident Stress Management: WC Community Mental Health trainers will teach local crisis team members the best practices when supporting our local communities in times of crisis. This session is adapted for school leaders.
- Supporting Our Youth Community Forum: WC Community Mental Health, Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools social workers, and WISD staff hosted a community forum in eastern Washtenaw County to provide information and resources after three student suicides in an eight-month period.

Mental health and social-emotional learning were identified by the Washtenaw County Superintendents' visioning sessions for education as priority areas for our schools. An initial planning group will be assembled in spring 2018 to design future work.

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS/RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

A subcommittee of the School Justice Partnership studied the legislative changes to the school discipline code and worked with the Washtenaw County High School Principals' Association to recommend training and support for 2017-18. A planning committee worked over the summer to explore potential presenters, as well as design a network within the county. The deliverables are:



- Fall 2017 study group with the high school principals to learn about and network with experienced school leaders on how to build alternatives to suspension into leadership practices.
- WISD offered free restorative practices introductory training. A second session was requested, so the introductory training occurred once in November and once in January.
- WISD offered free restorative practices circles training (skills practice sessions). This session was well received and will be offered again in February.
- WISD is hosting networking roundtables for practitioners who have attended the circles training. Casework is used to provide participants with guidance and support while learning to implement

within their schools. Upcoming sessions are in February, April, and June 2018. The goal is to identify a network of local leaders to become local trainers to serve our community by attending a Trainer of Trainer 5-day session, slated for summer or fall 2018.

The planning committee would also like to build out a training module to replicate the Sky Squad peer-to-peer restorative practices model.

WISD has continued to work closely with local law enforcement on school safety and education issues. The school safety actions include the following:

- Offered ALICE active shooter training sessions in the fall and early winter.
- Created an alert notification system, Handle with Care, that allows local law enforcement officers to send a short communication that a school-age child has been involved in a potentially traumatic situation within the home or community. The alert allows school staff to be better prepared to handle that child with care during the following school day. An action team has been meeting monthly since September and the system launched February 1, 2018.
- Two community training events were held with University of Michigan professionals, Dr. Polly Gibson and Dr. Kate Rosenblum. Video modules of the system and how to support youth and children are hosted on the WISD website.



Goal #2

Cultivate an organizational culture of equity, inclusion, and social justice through education, engagement, and action.

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



The Washtenaw ISD cabinet-level leadership team has been working on its intercultural development—as individuals and as a group. Each member has completed the *Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)* and has developed individual goals. The data from the tool was also aggregated at the group level. Our cabinet team reviewed that aggregated information and engaged in group-level goal setting. Outcomes of the work include:

- One personal intercultural development goal included in each leader’s formal evaluation.
- A focus on learning more about the work across the various ISD departments.
- Identifying and celebrating individual and departmental work that typifies our inclusive community statement and vision.
- Continued specific development for ISD leaders in the areas of equity, inclusion, and social justice.

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

The Pacific Education Group (PEG) hosted, in the fall, a National Summit for Courageous Conversations in Detroit. The national group and initiative provides a framing for holding conversations about race. We had a significant group of participants, 15 staff and board members, attend all or part of this Summit. The two-day pre-summit sessions “Beyond Diversity” and “Racial Equity Leadership” were attended by six WISD staff members and two board members.

There were several reasons behind sending a large group to the conference. To affect change, it's important for the leadership to gain a deeper understanding of racial equity, to grasp multiple perspectives of the non-dominant culture, to become better at listening and making decisions around the EISJ work. The information gleaned from the conference opens the opportunity to examine whether this approach would be a means to extend the equity work in Washtenaw County. Options to partner with neighboring ISDs are being explored to further develop our capacity to hold courageous conversations.

EISJ CORE TEAM

In 2016-17, the administrative team formed a small internal core group to plan and discuss the WISD direction around equity, inclusion, and social justice work. This group met over the course of last year. Washtenaw ISD has contracted with Gislaine Ngounou from Phi Delta Kappan to strengthen the group, clarify our purpose, and adjust our direction, specifically guiding the team as they engage in the EISJ work. We will have our clarified purpose and goals later in the spring of 2018, as well as a plan to expand the group to a more representative set of participants.

ACCREDITATION

Washtenaw ISD is in the process of renewing our AdvancED accreditation. This means we will have a team visit in April to review how well our organization meets the three core areas of the AdvancED rubric: Leadership Capacity, Learning Capacity, and Resource Capacity. To prepare for this visit, we will be compiling data across our services and initiatives as well as gathering stakeholder feedback. Because of our focus on equity, inclusion, and social justice, we have decided to take an equity lens for this accreditation cycle. We will press ourselves to look at each of the rubric areas in light of issues of equity. From our stakeholder data to our review of our existing data, we will be looking for evidence of our focus on equity, inclusion, and social justice.



FACILITIES ADJUSTMENTS

A highlight of the WISD's recent resources is a new lactation space for employees and visitors. The lactation area is in a quiet conference room just beyond the Business and HR Department in the Teaching and Learning Center. The WISD Board and Administration supports the decision of new mother's decision to breastfeed. The new space was created on the premise of easing the transition of employees who return to work and are still lactating/nursing, enabling employees to breastfeed beyond leave time (provided pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act), and assisting employees in achieving work-life balance. While Facilities and Administration are working out final procedural issues, such as Administrative Guidelines and appropriate signage, the room is available for use.



The Facilities Department is also pursuing a gender neutral/ common usage restroom in the WISD TLC Event Services area (near Seminar 4). The Operations Manager, Diane Sevigny, is meeting with the architect to determine the feasibility of the proposed plan to address and ensure privacy.



Goal #3

Advocate for policies that support equity and inclusion on the local, state, and national levels.

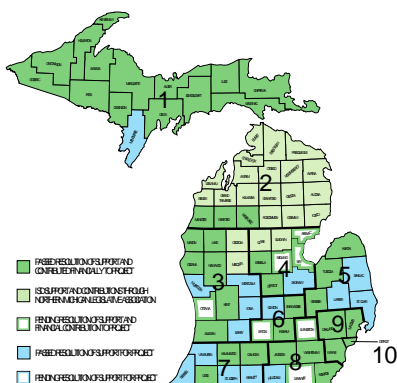
SPECIAL EDUCATION MILLAGE RENEWAL



In the spring of 2017, steps were taken to meet the legal requirements to place the special education millage renewal on the November 2017 ballot. At stake was 0.9719 mills or over \$15 million in funding for all public schools in Washtenaw County. After the WISD Board of Education acted to approve the ballot proposal, and the appropriate paperwork was filed with the county clerk's office, the campaign was organized to inform constituents of the ballot issue. Over 13,000 Information flyers and 150 posters were designed, printed, and delivered to the nine local districts, plus WISD, for distribution. Advertisements were placed in the *Ann Arbor News*, *The Ann Arbor Observer*, *The Sun Times News*, *5 Healthy Towns*, Facebook, and press releases sent to all the local media outlets. Let's Talk, a web-based communication tool, worked with the WISD Technology Department to host a page with an FAQ and general information about the millage renewal. All the local districts provided a link on their website to connect to the WISD web page. Social media was used to tell student success stories, reminding the public how their dollars support programs that benefit students with disabilities. When the final results were tallied, almost 74% of the voters said YES to renew the millage, once again affirming Washtenaw County's support of education.



CONTRIBUTIONS AND/ OR RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT
AS OF JANUARY 22, 2018



STATEWIDE FINANCE STUDY

During the October 10, 2017 WISD Board of Education meeting, the trustees pledged \$15,000 in support of the Michigan School Finance Study, being led by the Oakland Schools Foundation. On October 24th, the board also adopted a formal resolution in support of the study effort. Subsequently, the superintendent of WISD was invited to serve on the Project Steering and Technical Committee. Washtenaw ISD was one of the first ISDs, outside of the Tri-County, to endorse and pledge financial support for this work. On January 17, 2018, the results of the study were made public. The chart shows the statewide ISD support for this effort.

SCIENCE AND MATH CENTER TRANSITION

The Michigan legislature eliminated the long-standing Math and Science Network initiative in favor of a new funding and structure model for a MI-STEM network. This means that the Livingston and Washtenaw Math and Science Network is being phased out this year. In its place will be a six-county collaborative around Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Our region includes the six counties in our MAISA and Prosperity regions: Livingston, Lenawee, Washtenaw, Hillsdale, Jackson, and Monroe. Washtenaw ISD has been selected as the fiscal agent for the region, and we took the lead in submitting our transition plan. The transition work focuses on engaging district, university, business, and government partners and developing a strategic plan between April and September 2018.



EARLY LITERACY AND KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT (KRA)



Naomi Norman continues to co-chair the MAISA General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force. The task force has now produced five Essentials documents (PreK, K-3, and 4-5 Instructional Essentials, Coaching Essentials, and School and Center Level Essentials). Two more are underway: Birth-3 Language and Literacy Essentials and 6-12 Interdisciplinary Literacy Essentials. The Coaching Essentials were used as the guiding document to define the MDE “Coaching Model” required by the 3rd grade reading bill. The first set of online modules, containing video of the Essentials in action, were released in November. More of these online modules will be released every 3-4 weeks throughout the spring. All of these resources can be found at www.literacyessentials.org. In addition, MDE has convened groups of educators to help guide the rewriting of the Michigan Literacy Plan, a body of work that is heavily relying on the Early Literacy Task Force theory of action and Essentials.

The Governor’s PreK-12 Literacy Commission continues to meet. The group has developed a strategic plan and is refining the plan before its spring 2018 release. As the Vice-Chair of the group, Naomi is integrally involved in the planning and direction of the group.

To keep the early literacy direction aligned, Naomi is a part of several other groups including: MDE coaching model action team, MDE Early Literacy Standards-Setting Action Team (to determine new standards for teacher education programs), and the 4-6 Literacy Standards-Setting Action Team. She is also a representative on the MDE micro-credential model development committee as the state determines new ways to credential educators.

Michigan Virtual received a substantial state budget allocation for development of professional learning models, and we have partnered to ensure that they are using a design thinking approach to the visioning around this work. An RFP will be released by Michigan Virtual soon with the project to be completed by September. This RFP will utilize the Early Literacy Essentials as the anchor content to invent and pilot a statewide professional learning system.

After successfully securing \$1 million in the School Aid budget to continue the implementation of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA, also referred to as the Michigan Kindergarten Entry Observation) in Michigan, the piloting of the tool with a handful of ISDs continued in the fall of 2017. Melissa Brooks-Yip, Coordinator of Instruction for WISD, has been appointed as the state level coordinator for KRA implementation. Melissa’s role in coordinating the Study of Early Literacy (SOEL) has proven invaluable in recruiting local KRA coaches and helping districts to understand the important relationship between pre-k and kindergarten instructional practices and assessment. She also works with Johns Hopkins University and supports the plan for the full-scale administration of the tool in every kindergarten classroom, in 21 ISDs, for fall 2018.



We have regional training events confirmed for April and May in each of the three regions implementing the KRA in 2018. We have also conducted in-person updates and webinars for ISD leaders, curriculum directors, elementary principals, and for MAISA’s General Education Leadership Network (GELN) and Early Childhood Administrators’ Network (ECAN). An implementation guide and FAQ document has been created and is being shared with ISDs and LEAs. We also have a very productive partnership developing with the Michigan Data Hub team who are creating a mechanism for KRA data to be shared and aligned with other student data collections.

EDUCATION IN THE COUNTY JAIL

Washtenaw ISD continues to work with the Washtenaw County Jail and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) administrative team to draft a cooperative agreement to design and implement educational services for school age youth incarcerated in their facility. Steps we have taken this fall include:

- Designed a weekly data pull process to identify new youth, scan their school records, complete an intake interview, and coordinate with key local staff.
- Provided social work services.
- Audited the existing educational programming and worked with key community partners to build more robust options for fall 2018.
- Worked with AAPS and WCSO on the details of the cooperative agreement, which is in the final stage of review.
- Hired Jennifer Monahan as the Youth Transitions Manager. Jennifer comes to WISD after working in the Milan Prison educational program for 12 years.
- Participated in a design team to explore the pending legislative changes that would raise the age to 18 for the juvenile court to have jurisdiction. This would move many of the 17-year olds who are currently incarcerated in the county jail to the county youth center.

