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Honeoye Falls – Lima Central School District Diversity Committee

Tuesday, May 19, 2009
7:00 PM
Room 116 High School

Minutes

Attendance:

Phil Burrows, James Goodman (student rep), Mary McNamara, Dick Rasmussen, David Roth
Chris Shashaty, Melinda Tompkins, Amelia Vojt (student rep), and Cindy Zauski

Announcements:

Phil Burrows shared that the Diversity Award presentation to the Board of Education has been rescheduled to June 9, 2009. A short reception for the recipients will be included at the start of the meeting.

Superintendent's Update:

Phil Burrows and Dick Rasmussen shared the Superintendent's highlights:

- Since the District received the Magna Award for its Diversity Initiative, a number of districts and colleges have contacted us about our work.
- Andy Fleming, High School counselor, has returned from his year of service work in Malawi. Andy will be sharing his experiences with both Middle and High School students in the coming year.
- Cross-age peer experiences continue to strengthen and expand around the District.
- High School Mentoring program is ready to be launched this coming fall. High School juniors and seniors will be trained to mentor a select group of Middle School students in order to help them become more comfortable during their transition to high school.
- Dick Rasmussen presented a diversity workshop to 25 freshmen students this spring. Dr. Kavanaugh was a presenter on a regional panel regarding Literacy and Diversity this past March and the District will be presenting a workshop on diversity at the New York State School Board's Association in October 2009.
- The Healthy Rites of Passage featured speakers on preventing sexting and harassment. Over 150 attendees listened to the panel discussion. A representative from the Monroe County Sheriff department and a speaker from the Center for Missing and Exploited Children discussed the issues.
- A Day of Silence was held on April 17. The national event is designed to help bring awareness to sexual preference. David Roth shared that some parents expressed

concerns about the event. Phil Burrows shared that much of the harassment and bullying that goes on is at the high school is directed toward the gay and lesbian population. In conjunction with this event, High School teacher Joan Hamer shared a slide show on the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Educational Network (GLSEN) with the faculty at a recent staff meeting. This summer, Joan will present a staff development offering on the support group's focus on ensuring a safe school environment for all students. David Roth will share Joan's slide show with the committee at a later date. In addition, Dick Rasmussen shared a resource on bullying, "Ouch that Hurts."

Program Update:

- Mary McNamara presented a short slide show on the highlights from the Europe and Quebec City student trips. The student rep, James Goodman, participated on the Europe trip and added his perspectives on the trip too.
- Next year, the Middle School will participate in the Kidbridge Program to develop a joint unit of study with sixth grade students from the Rochester City School District – School #39. Planning will begin this summer or early fall. Hoa Tran, Sixth grade teacher and Diversity Committee member, will participate and provide updates as the program develops.
- The culminating event of Community Reads was held at the end of Cougar Creations. A dance was held in the Middle School cafeteria. Students, parents, teachers and HFL Board members enjoyed the music and danced well into the evening. It was also noted that community members positively commented on the performance of music and displays of art techniques representative of cultures from around the world at this year's Cougar Creation event.

Brainstorm Potential Action Items for 2009 - 10

The committee discussed:

- Hazing is often viewed as rite of passage, but is a major source of bullying and harassment. The change in HFL's Code of Conduct has helped with the more severe practices, but the practice does remain in according to our students. While studies indicate that student leaders often participate, they also can play a key role in setting the tone and leading positive team building. It was suggested that we focus what brings people together to build a team.
- At the student diversity workshop concerns were expressed about stereotyping around social economic status, teasing of high achieving students, and harassment based on sexual orientation. Our students have shared that they have all had experiences with feeling marginalized. Exploring avenues to enhance respectful behavior needs to be a priority.
- Other areas to attend to in the coming year...
 - Day of Silence: It was suggested that we share the purpose with parents. Dick shared that the BOE is supportive of the event. Chris Shashaty shared how Xerox has focused on building team work within the workplace through their program, GALAX – Gay and Lesbians at Xerox. The focus is not on endorsing a life style; rather, it works to build a positive work environment for all.
- The action items cited above will be incorporated into the Planning Guide and shared via the minutes. In addition, future staff development offerings will address these concerns.

Board of Education Report

The report will be presented on Tuesday, May 26. Phil Burrows and Mary McNamara will answer questions about this year's accomplishments.

Meeting Dates for 2009 – 10

- October 6, 2009
- December 15, 2009
- March 15, 2010
- May 18, 2010