The Brent Elementary Diversity Working Group met on 12/18/19, in the Brent library, located at 301 North Carolina Ave. SE, Washington DC. The meeting began at 6:00pm.

Meeting Participants: Jon Berg, Leda Bloomfield, Piper Campbell, Melinda Copeland, Danielle Drissel (Chair), Sara Ewbank, Dayon Hairston, Machee Kelly, Norah Lycknell (Principal), Josie Malone, Andrew Pratt, Charrise Robinson, Erin Roth, Sharon Santos, Bettina Schwebe, Adi Segal, and Albendia Sherrod. (17)

1. Mid-year overview: The meeting began with a review of programming for the first half of the school year and a look-ahead to the rest of the school year, with a particular focus on the events planned for January and February (see more below.)

Activities to-date include:
- Hispanic/LatinX Heritage Month: Two family funday activities; and reading spotlight
- Veterans Day: funday activity; reading spotlight and display;
- Native American Heritage Month: reading spotlight;
- National Adoption Month: reading spotlight;
- Inclusive Schools: activity sent home (paired with school organized activities);
- Multi-cultural night;
- Facilitated discussion of shared reading on race and education at November community meeting;
- Brent buddies activity at Welcome Picnic;
- Support for Family Listening Sessions;
- Used Uniform program;
- Rising Together program

2. Break-out sessions and debrief: Following the overview, the meeting broke into groups to address three questions: 1) What were the strengths of the DWG fall activities? 2) What could be improved or replaced all together? And 3) What do you see as an area of personal engagement in 2020?

Issues raised in the debrief of the break-out sessions were: Multicultural night; Brent Buddies; Deepening engagement in cultural celebrations.

**Multicultural Night.** There was general satisfaction with having multicultural night in the fall, but a hope to avoid conflicts with other community events (e.g. Halloween; Nationals’ game). The mariachi band was popular – as was the opportunity for conversation and social connections (a positive side effect of lower turn-out than the prior year.) There was support for having a display related to multicultural night after the fact to highlight the cultural diversity of the student body.
A suggested improvement was to delay the beginning of the program until 15 minutes after the start time so that people can get oriented and then join the activities in the cafeteria and to be clearer about the schedule – maybe have programs?

**Brent Buddies.** There was a range of experiences with Brent Buddies, from welcoming and helpful to either being matched too late or not having the opportunity to create genuine connection. Additional volunteers would enable more timely matches. Discussion about how to ensure Brent as a community feels welcoming to newcomers included suggestions for soliciting Brent Buddy volunteers in early Spring and developing a buddy program for students.

**Deepening Engagement.** There was some discussion about whether repeating the same events each year might generate a lower degree of response (e.g., with Veterans’ Day display). We want to avoid seeming to trivialize diversity, as could be felt by a one-day observation of some difference. The goal should be to work towards deeper engagement. Suggestions included highlighting different activities year-to-year; spreading activities out; incorporating suggestions for how parents can carry on conversation at home, and using the room parent communication network to get specific targeted engagement.

3. **Promoting Inclusion/Social Justice - Used Uniform program.** The group celebrated the expansion on the Used Uniform Program. Teachers and staff are using the donations to help students in need of weather appropriate attire. Labeling of bins and signs have made it easier for folks to access the clothes. The group discussed ways to build and maintain support for the Used Uniform Program, including a FAQ for volunteers and assigning grades to staff the uniform.

4. **January/February:** For January the decision was made to focus DWG on the MLK poster party. Although some Brent families may participate in the 2020 MLK day parade, DWG will not organize participation this year. Students in Rising Together will be invited to join the MLK poster party and the Black History Month Living Wax Museum. The Black History Month theme for February is voting, which allows for a natural connection to a Women’s History Month celebration in March of the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment. February 27 is the annual school-wide reading of I Am Jazz and additional titles about inclusive gender expression will be available as well.

Coordinating committees were formed for upcoming events.
- MLK Poster Party (1/21/20): Copeland, Berg, Hairston, Segal
- Family CommUnity Dance (2/7): Santos, Robinson, Bloomfield, Hairston, Drissel, Berg, Copeland, and Sherrod.
- Living Wax Museum (2/28): TBD. Ms. Hairston is lead.

Meeting ended at 7:40. The next meeting is January 22, 2020.
TAB 1: Agenda
Brent Diversity Working Group (DWG) Meeting
Wednesday, December 18, 6:00 – 7:30

1. Welcome
2. Mid-year overview (15 minutes)
   a. All-school social events
      i. Reflection: Welcome Picnic; Multicultural night
      ii. Looking ahead: MLK poster party & march; CommUNITY dance
   b. Cultural celebrations
      i. Reflection: Hispanic\LatinX Heritage Month (Sept-Oct); Native American Heritage Month (Nov); Veterans Day; National Adoption Month (Nov)
      ii. Looking ahead: Black History Month (Feb); Women’s History Month (March); Month of the Military Child (April); Asian American and Pacific Islander Month (May); Pride (June)
   c. Student Engagement
      i. Reflection: Inclusive Schools; Rising Together
      ii. Looking ahead: Rising Together; Book exchange; Summer brain gain
   d. Promoting Inclusion/Social Justice
      i. Reflection: Brent Buddies; Used uniform program; Assessing financial requests of Brent families; Facilitating community discussions; Listening sessions
      ii. Looking ahead: More of same, including Brent Buddy registration; April community meeting
3. Small group discussion framed by the overview (30 minutes)
   a. Strength from DWG activity in fall 2019;
   b. DWG activity from fall could be improved/replaced in 2020; and
4. Share out of 2020 vision and planning (30 minutes)
5. Other topics? (10 minutes)

Mark Your Calendars – NEXT MEETING: January 22, 2020

Mission Statement: The Brent Diversity Working Group advances the school’s commitment to recognizing, respecting, valuing and promoting diversity by serving as a resource and liaison for students, families, staff and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach and advocacy.

Website: http://www.brentelementary.org/diversity-working-group.html