The Brent Elementary Diversity Working Group met on January 22, 2020 in the Brent library, located at 301 North Carolina Ave. SE, Washington DC. The meeting began at 6:00pm.

Meeting Participants: Chiraag Bains, Leda Bloomfield, Piper Campbell, Melinda Copeland, Danielle Drissel (Chair), Sara Ewbank, Dayon Hairston, Jasmine Leary, Tendai Pasipanudya, Andrew Pratt, Charrise Robinson, Erin Roth, Sharon Santos, Adi Segal, Albendia Wambach-Sherrod, and Bettina Schewe. (16)

1. Promoting Inclusion/Social Justice - Uniform program: Some great work has been done recently in continuing to strengthen the Uniform Recycling program. DWG reviewed a flyer meant to publicize the program, especially with the goal of having additional people volunteer to “staff” the uniform bins. Volunteering is a relatively light lift, and is core to the program’s implementation. The DWG reviewed the language on the flyer which explains how funds raised are used. Sara Ewbank described how funds have been disbursed to-date, based on identified need. DWG members discussed the current process, recommended some edits to the flyer and advocated continued promotion of this great program! PreK and K families have committed to staff two upcoming dates, and we may try to generate additional enthusiasm by having grades “sponsor” dates.

2. Student Engagement - Rising Together Update: Dayon Hairston, one of the two Rising Together staff leads, provided a brief overview of the special activity organized to mark the conclusion of the fall session of Rising Together (RT). RT students and family members made a trip to the Kennedy Center. Fifteen children initially registered for the fall program and thirteen completed it. Ms. Hairston recently sent information about enrolling for the spring session to families with third, fourth and fifth graders. RT is willing to take up to thirty children for the spring session, although if the group ends up being that large, it may present some challenges in maintaining the group’s intimacy. DWG participants had the opportunity to briefly talk with a student enrolled in RT to get direct feedback on the program.

3. All-school social events - MLK celebration and poster party update: Somewhere between 12-15 children participated in the Tuesday, January 21 MLK Poster party. There was an interesting mix of fourth graders and “little people”. The posters will be used as décor for the CommUNITY Dance. Note: There was significant interest expressed in the “day of service” component of MLK day. This is something to discuss at a subsequent meeting.

4. Planning for CommUNITY Dance (2/7): In preparation for this year’s CommUNITY dance, the DWG reviewed successes and challenges from last year’s dance. Sara Ewbank reviewed a bit of the history of the dance: kids wanted a participatory event with their parents and other members. There was a strong interest in promoting interaction and creating opportunities for intermingling, meeting new people, making new friends – block-party style. These goals drive some decisions – e.g., not having many chairs, in order to keep people moving/interacting. We
had over 300 participants in 2019. It was crazy and fun. A take-away from last year was to try to make even a closer connection to Black History month. Given this year’s focus on voting, the group discussed fun, but non-political, ideas – including an activity to make vote-related buttons. Leda also suggested having students vote for the BRENT Jubilee IceCream Flavor. (Piper will follow up on that.) DWG will try to communicate broadly, with the message “coming is terrific and volunteering is even better!” We will encourage people to bring water bottles.

### 5. Cultural celebrations - Planning for Black History Month (February) – The Living History Museum is scheduled for February 25. This year’s theme is elected officials and politicians. There is a list of suggestions, but students could add to the list if they can find information about the individual via age-appropriate research. Another note about student sign-up will go out soon.

Other items discussed were **readings** -- reading spotlights and In-school readings – associated with upcoming themes, as well as upcoming displays planned and other school activities with a diversity angle. The group took note of planning for the all-school reading of *Jazz*, as well as some other age-appropriate LGBTQ theme books, on 2/28 and & planning for Women’s History Month (March). There was discussion about a reading spotlight and family funday activity but no final decisions were taken.

Meeting ended at 7:40. The next meeting is March 18, 2020
AGENDA

1. **Welcome** (5 minutes)

2. **Promoting Inclusion/Social Justice** (15 minutes)
   a. Uniform program: Allocation of funds; recruiting flyer; volunteers for State of School (1/29) and beyond

3. **Student Engagement** (5 minutes)
   a. Rising Together Update: enrollment, Fall/Spring activities, support from DWG

4. **All-school social events** (30 minutes)
   a. Reflection: MLK celebration and poster party
   b. Planning for CommUNITY Dance (2/7): volunteers; activities; food; decorations

5. **Cultural celebrations** (30 minutes)
   a. Planning for Black History Month (February)
      a. Living History Museum (2/28): event details; student sign-up; role for parents/DWG
      b. Readings: Reading spotlight; In-school reading?
      c. Display or other school activities?
   b. Planning for Jazz & Friends Reading (2/28): announcement?
   c. Planning for Women’s History Month (March): reading spotlight; family funday?

6. **Other topics?** (5 minutes)

Mark Your Calendars – NEXT MEETING: March 18, 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](http://www.brentelementary.org/diversity-working-group.html)

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