The Brent Elementary Diversity Working Group met virtually on 5/23/20 via Zoom, given ongoing COVID restrictions. The meeting began at 8:30pm.

Meeting Participants: Jon Berg, Leda Bloomfield, Piper Campbell, Danielle Drissel, Sara Ewbank, Charisse Robinson, Tara Goldberg, Tori Hawkins-Plummer, Dayon Hairston, Lucy Hynes, Machee Kelly, Kiana Moore, Andrew Pratt, Erin Roth, Bettina Schewe, and Adi Segal. (16 people)

1) **Review of Activities Conducted Despite Distance Learning:** The Diversity Working Group was able to support some activities despite distance learning and social distancing restrictions imposed because of COVID-19 and the subsequent shut-down of in-person learning at Brent. The Zoom meeting began with a review of activities the DWG coordinated in April-May. These included interaction with IceCream Jubilee around community building and honoring everyone’s ideas and voice; “Purple Up” to honor our military families; and the distribution of materials about tolerance and the importance of acting against discrimination, including linked to Asian American and Pacific Islanders month.

2) **Pride:** Brent’s usual Pride activities have had to be revised due to COVID, shifting to a distribution of useful resources – with a focus on those which help parents think about how to talk with elementary-age kids -- and a reading spotlight.

3) **Social Distancing/Themed Weeks/Tech:** Engagement multilevel, posted to Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Multiple venues, multi posting. How can we use social media as a tool, not always asking folks to join an activity. Not just fun. Networks of communication changing click rate TuesNews high. DWG Instagram account – what are the guidelines. Might there be utility to a DWG “channel” in MS Teams?

Sara Ewbank emphasized the value of the A-Z Directory, and noted that MS Teams was scheduled to close on June 4, with summer school teams opening thereafter. Students can use Teams if it is “perpetually monitored” but there cannot be unsupervised Teams. There are some possibilities, a Rising Together Team, for example, could be possible. Bettina Schewe said there will be some library-related activities available over the summer. Sara Ewbank explained that a limited number of Brent staff (including herself, Bettina and Dayon) are employed on 12-month contracts versus 10-month contracts, and therefore will be available over the summer months.

There will be a community meeting next week. While teachers and administrators have a picture of what “now” looks like, it’s unclear what the future will hold. It does seem clear that distance learning has exacerbated inequities. There are mental health concerns...
for kids and faculty. Brent administration is continuing work on a family-to-family basis and via social networks.

4.) Brent Buddies: As compared to “normal” years, there are more members of the Brent family coming back or staying for AY 20-21. There will not be as many new families. However, we still do not have enough Brent Buddies signed up. We have more than 30 families signed up, but we need more. There’s also an idea to extend the Brent Buddies program to families who might need to re-establish connection.

5. Misc, It’s unclear what will happen in AY 20-21 with other support programs – like Everybody Wins (and the National War College?) There was a discussion about the process through which the DWG will identify its priorities for AY 20-21.

6) Election of Board for 2020-21: DWG extended its thanks to this year’s wonderful (!) board. DWG elected the following to fulfill the roles in 2020/21: Chair, Leda Bloomfield; Vice Chair, Erin Roth; Secretary Piper Campbell; Rising Together * Parent Liaison Adi Segal (acting until a replacement is identified);

Next meeting date: June 11, 2020

The meeting concluded at 9:00 pm

Note: The Bylaws still need to be changed to reflect the name change from Rising Tides to Rising Together and, now, to define the role of the Vice-Chair.

Note: It may be useful at next meeting to review the closing notes from the 2019 board: The 2018-19 academic year included a display or two almost every month. DWG should work with the Administration and PTA on calendering/deconfliction. In AY 19-20, major DWG events to be calendared are Inclusive Schools Week, CommUnity Dance, Black History Living Wax Museum, and International Night.

Recommendations: Establish an earlier meeting time (i.e., 6:00 – 7:30). International Night should be re-labeled as Multicultural Night. Spread out events clustered in January/February. Some discussion of having Multicultural Night in May (maybe on Friday at end of PARCC?) Consider a shared calendar to ensure coordinated use of bulletin boards.