

WCHS Inclusive Achievement Council

10/31/18

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The [WCHS Inclusive Achievement Council](#) held its first meeting on Friday, Oct 26. One of the first topics of discussion was the school's response to last week's discovery of a swastika drawn on a classroom table. Other agenda topics included planning a second student [Study Circle](#), currently anticipated for second quarter of this school year. Also discussed was an update on the school's [No Place for Hate program](#), started last Spring and sadly even more relevant in light of last week's heinous hate crime in Pittsburgh. The next Council meeting is scheduled for the week of Nov 12.

Background

The Winston Churchill Inclusive Achievement Council (IAC) was proposed by a group of Churchill parents who felt that our school had not achieved its potential in meeting the needs of *all* of its students.

In the 2016-7 and again in the 2017-8 school years, there were multiple incidents of hate speech as well as racial bullying, on and off campus, that left many students and parents concerned about the learning climate at the Churchill. Over a period of several months, these concerns were repeatedly presented to Churchill and MCPS central administration. This eventually led to some important developments.

One of these was the planning and execution in March 2018 of two Study Circles with Churchill students, parents, staff and administrators. [Study Circles](#) are structured conversations designed to promote frank and open dialogue, often on uncomfortable topics. These Study Circles were led by the highly experienced team members at the [MCPS Equity Initiative Unit](#).

A diverse group of students participated and shared experiences of difficult, even painful, moments at Churchill that were centered on their race, gender, religion or ethnicity. The extent and depth of these experiences was eye-opening to many of the participants and led to the conviction that we can and must strive to make our school more welcoming and supportive of its diverse student body.

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At the end of 2017-8 school year and at the beginning of 2018-9 school year, concerned parents met with Principal Heckert who enthusiastically endorsed an effort to work collaboratively on these issues. From these conversations, the Winston Churchill Inclusive Achievement Council (IAC) was born.

The Council needs your participation !

Our school body contains a diversity of religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender orientation and race. Input from diverse group of parents reflective of this variety is needed. If you are interested in sharing your ideas or participating at any level simply contact any of the current parent members, staff or administrators below. *We need your voice.*

Mission, Vision and Charge

Below is the charter of the Inclusive Achievement Council, drafted in Fall 2018. We expect the charter to evolve in coming years, to reflect students' changing experiences at Winston Churchill HS.

Mission

An inclusive and collaborative effort between administrators, staff, parents and students, which

1. actively seeks broad input from the community, understanding its religious, ethnic, racial and gender diversity,
2. supports student and school efforts to combat bias and stereotyping,
3. helps build a school culture where hateful speech or actions are rare and not tolerated,

so that all students feel respected and can achieve at their highest level, regardless of their background.

Charge

1. Coordinate or advise school and student run programs that support this mission
2. Act as a resource for parents and students with concerns about bias or intolerance
3. Increase awareness of implicit bias among students and staff
4. Promote respectful conversations regarding identity
5. Identify and rebut hateful speech in the school community on and off campus, and advise school regarding consequences when it occurs
6. Periodically survey student body regarding bias, stereotyping, bullying and publicize results

Composition

Principal, Assistant Principals, Staff, Parents and Students

Parents:

- one position designated for NAACP parent rep and one for PTSA representative
- goal is diverse representation in religion, ethnicity, race and gender

Co-chairs: Principal and one parent

2018-2019 Council Members

Administration

Principal: Mrs. Heckert

Assistant Principals: Mrs. Gasaway, Dr. Howard, Mr. Reck, Mr. Rohner

Staff

Haroot Hakopian

others TBD

Students

TBD

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Parents

Azeb Aregawi ([email](#)), Mahrukh Hussein ([email](#)), Ping Liu ([email](#)), Susan Namath ([email](#)), Carla Rush ([email](#)), Felasfa Wodajo ([email](#))

Co-Chairs

- Brandi Heckert, Principal
- Felasfa Wodajo, parent co-chair