

Interviews, March/April 2018

Maiah Merino meets with Student groups to triangulate data

Racial Equity

Student Conversations: McMurray

Winter 2018

25 students were interviewed, not all students answered each question so the total asked for each question is given. Students were interviewed with other peers and were given the option to leave if they did not want to be a part of answering the questions. All were offered a snack or two and drinks.

- ❖ 18 of 25 students reported hearing racial slurs daily and weekly.
- ❖ 8 of 19 students had racial slurs directed at them.
- ❖ 4 students reported being verbally attacked (such as the N Word, "I Hate Black People") and 1 was physically attacked/assaulted.
- ❖ 24 of 25 students reported having a safe adult to talk to if they needed someone to go to.
- ❖ 2 of 10 have peers question their intelligence "stupid or idiot" and 1 has had an experience with a teacher.

Things they would like from the school:

- African-American teachers and staff
- Latinx-American teachers and staff
- Posters of their cultures around the school
- A sign over the water fountain that says "All Are Welcome Here"
- That students recognize what they are saying more often and who is around them
- Many wanted to share their cultural heritages more like: music, foods, dances and special celebrations.

All students had stress relief activities/ideas they practiced regularly.

Listening Groups II: McMurray Students 5/21/18

Compiled by: Maiah A Merino, Racial Equity Consultant

Since you gave feedback to the school a couple of months ago, what have you noticed in terms of changes or adjustments in your school?

- 27 out of 28 students said there has been no change.
- 1 commented it felt more peaceful, calming and there was more play in the halls

Have things felt different or better?

- All commented that it has not felt better, but instead “worse”; “nothing has changed”; “the amount of people making jokes has increased”; “the discussions are provoking the wrong thing and the opposite is happening”; “the same.”

What do you think of the Home room curriculum about racism? How is it hearing and talking about this with your classmates?

- “After the CEE surveys were read, the N word and more jokes are heard everywhere”; “It’s Fun”; “It’s a lot. A student got kicked out for laughing about something”; “In my homeroom, kids laugh a lot and the teacher gets angry”; A couple of students commented it wasn’t happening in their homerooms; “Not sure it’s helping. It’s good to let others know this is happening”; “Everyone just laughs, it kinda sad”; “People don’t take it seriously”; “fine.”

- Other comments about incidences of racism happening to them: “on the bus being called Brownie”; “I have had more teachers touching my hair and putting their fingers through my hair than before and 1 male, it was so gross”; “yeah, I had a whole group of students putting their hands through my hair”; “In Homerooms remarks are repeated many times and the same kids are given warnings and continue doing it everyday”; “a lot of teachers here are racist. . . I can be the first to raise my hand and not be chosen. They give attention to the popular girls and I am sitting in the back with my hand raised not getting attention”; “I have not had this experience. I am called on”.

What other suggestions do you have for next steps for next year?

- “Having Kids go in front of the school who have been bullied to share their stories”; “More electives”; “Doing more about the name-calling. When a student is told over and over again, not to do something and they continue they shouldn’t just be told to apologize or not to say that word or act that way, their parents should be called and they should enforce more discipline. Because the kids that keep doing it don’t look at it like they really got in trouble.”; “Teachers don’t usually see it—during break, lunch and in hallways—they should move around more”; “this would be less of a problem, if we did nothing”; “tone down the amount of stuff, we have more jokes now, so, it’s a lose-lose situation”; “if we ignore it, people won’t know it’s wrong or, how it hurts your feelings”; “Club for diverse people”.

Would you be interested in being a part of a student panel or, a Welcome Week next year to orient new students?

- WOW week—“timing, it would have been good to have more time to work on it”; “strange timing, Welcome Week at the end of the year”; “people changed the peace sign

to the middle finger”; “for the pass on challenge, people didn’t want to pass it on”; “Advertising the Welcome Week more”.

- There are two lists of students interested in participating in a Welcome Week next year.

Are there any important dates we need to know about to add to our school calendar?

- Dia de Los Muertos; MLK Day; Black History Month; Malcom X’s Birthday; Teacher Appreciation Week; Dia de Virgen de Guadalupe; Mexican Mother’s Day; Dia de Los Ninos.