

On Fri, Mar 26, 2021 at 9:54 AM Terri Roberts-Leonard <troberts@ccs.k12.in.us> wrote:

Greetings and Good Morning!

Thank you sincerely for taking the time to participate in yesterday's listening session. I truly appreciate your time, vulnerability and openness. I am incredibly sorry to hear about the negative experiences and it is my hope that the work that I am doing and that I will do in the future has an impact on shifting the culture in a positive direction. I want all students to feel safe, valued and affirmed in our schools and to thrive, not just survive. To those of you who were unable to attend but registered I still wanted to include you on this correspondence to share information with you.

I am attaching a flyer about our next Courageous Conversations event which is open to the public. It is a panel discussion about DEI in CCS and in the city of Carmel. Please register to attend at: <https://forms.gle/hL7ijnMus6QSwrrL8>. Also, please follow my department on Instagram at [ccs_dei](#) for updates and information.

Just to provide you with a little information. Below is a list of some of the current initiatives going on in relation to DEI in our district. I am looking forward to many more as we continue doing this work!

- There is a district wide equity committee that formed this year and will be expanding next year as I adjust our structure.

- I, along with the chairs of the District Equity Committee, are working on a proposed new structure for DEI in CCS.

- I am working alongside our Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Thomas Oestreich, in working to diversify our staff through new teacher hiring. (If you know anyone looking for a teaching position please feel free to have them forward their resume to us.)

- Our professionals are working on building our DEI district webpage which will have district information as well as resources for the community.

- The Carmel Education Foundation has funded several grants to support various DEI initiatives that schools proposed. For example Carmel Elementary received a grant and purchased new books featuring diverse characters and topics for their library. The grant that I received went to partially funding the upcoming Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Lending Library for staff that will contain materials for use in classrooms and for employee professional development and growth around DEI topics.

-There are DEI committees at some of the schools and I will be working with the schools that do not have them to expand that to all schools in some capacity.

-Employee book studies have happened and are happening currently at some of the schools. I am planning a district-wide book study for the Summer of the book *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad.

-The Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment department is working with schools in regards to DEI. One example is recently the Indiana Department of Education came in to work with the CHS English department as they embark on the new book adoption process. Secondary administrators and ESC administrators are reading the book *Grading for Equity*.

-I have started a Canvas page with some resources for employees.

-I am and will be hosting events that are open to the community like the Spoken Word event in February, the Empowering Our Girls event last week and the DEI in Our Community event next month.

-I have started an Excellence in Equity training series for CCS employees. I did a session on Allyship in February, Intersectionality in March and Microaggressions will be in April.

-Stephanie Whiteside, our district Mental Health Coordinator, and I have put together a schedule of Summer trainings for employees across various topics such as Creating Inclusive Classrooms, DEI Core Concepts (which includes implicit bias) and Understanding Foster & Adoptive Families to name a few. Additionally, Indy Pride will be doing two trainings for our staff on LGBTQ+ topics.

-I put on a Black History Month Art & Poetry Contest for grades K-12 and a Women's History Month essay contest for high school students in March.

-We have grown our Instagram following to almost 600 on that new account. We use that account to help promote events, what is happening in our district as well as to share DEI facts, infographics and so on (example this month we have been posting about Disability Awareness Month and Women's History Month).

This is just a list of some of the things currently going on. The last 8 weeks have certainly been a whirlwind! I will be planning for the 2021-2022 school year in the coming month so I welcome any input you would like to provide. There are some things I know I plan on pursuing such as having schools take a look at their handbooks, traditions and practices through a lens of equity and shifting based on that analysis. This work is multi-faceted and there is a lot to do at all levels. I appreciate your support in these endeavors. At the same time if there is something that you find problematic, feel free to reach out to me and we can engage in dialogue about that as well. No one is perfect and I am open to constructive criticism as we go along in this journey.

I inquired into the policies in regards to hate speech as asked about on our call. Dr. Amy Dudley, Assistant Superintendent, stated that hate speech would be covered in several

of our board policies, including 4362 Non-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment and 4362.01 Anti-Bullying. This would also be covered in the student handbooks for each school. For your ease the Nondiscrimination statement can be found here: <https://www.ccs.k12.in.us/services/food-service/nondiscrimination-statement>.

I apologize for the length of this email but I wanted to try to hit as much as possible!
Have a great weekend!

Respectfully,

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she/her/hers
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