

PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EQUITY PLAN

I. EQUITY PLANNING TEAM

A. Membership

Sandy Symington	-	Consumer Education Teacher (PCS)
Robert Drapcho	-	Technical Education Teacher (PHS)
Mary Burdick	-	Business Education Teacher (PHS)
Robert Riley	-	Technical Education Teacher (PCS)
Michael Faulkenberry	-	Guidance Counselor (PHS)
Joseph Dabkowski	-	Guidance Counselor (PCS)
Marc Barry	-	Principal (MES)
Rena Cadro	-	Coordinator of Grants/Assessment
James Blair	-	Director of PPS
David Marchesseault	-	Superintendent

B. Purpose

To assist in the process from needs assessment and plan development to the implementation and periodic review of a local equity plan.

C. Background

The team was organized when the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 redirected federal assistance for vocational education in order to focus the federal funds on improving vocational education and services for members of special populations. The Act provided federal “set-asides” appropriated to all states for gender equity. Some of these funds were also designated for programs, and activities to eliminate gender bias and stereotyping in secondary and postsecondary vocational education. Eligible Perkins recipients under the Act were required to develop and implement gender equity plans to reduce gender bias and stereotype across all levels of the school system. As the 90’s wore on further legislation required that all forms of bias be eliminated in the schools. Therefore, the team now deals with equity in general and its goal is to insure that **all forms of discrimination are eliminated** in the Plainfield Public Schools.

II. DISTRICT PROFILE

The Plainfield Public Schools include three modern elementary school buildings housing preschool through grade five. An Early Childhood Center will open in the fall of 2000. Our contemporary middle school, which was recently nominated by the State Department of Education for the National Secondary School Recognition Program, uses the team concept and encompasses grades six through eight. Plainfield High School, which received its ten year New England accreditation in 1990, houses grades nine through twelve.

III. NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

A. Enrollment Summary

In October 1999, there were 2845 students enrolled in the Plainfield Public Schools, 1485 boys and 1360 girls. All students at the middle school were enrolled in all subject area courses, including “home economics” and technology education. At the high school, of the 331 students enrolled in technology education, 33 were female. There were 180 students enrolled in home economics at the high school, 146 females and 34 males. The enrollment in our business education classes is 290, with 112 males and 178 females.

B. Summary of Survey

Using the procedures as outlined in the “Wisconsin Model for Sex Equity in Career and Vocational Education”, the Equity Planning Team conducted a survey in 1993.

The following groups participated in the survey:

1. All students in grades 6, 8, 10, 12
2. All administrators
3. All guidance counselors
4. All teachers in grades 6-12

The Equity Planning Team analyzed the data collected and established the following needs:

STUDENTS

There was a need to:

- Dispel traditional gender roles and build self-esteem in non-traditional occupations.
- Help students connect exploratory courses with their future goals.
- Encourage more females to enter technology courses and careers.
- Encourage all students to be leaders and emphasize importance of leadership skills.
- Help students understand why all of the students must take all of the courses at the exploratory level.
- Have more males participate in student organizations.

ADMINISTRATORS

There was a need to:

- Actively recruit females for positions in technology education as teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Actively recruit males for positions as social workers, nurses, clerks, secretaries and paraprofessionals.
- Establish peer support groups for students enrolled or considering enrollment in non-traditional classes.

- Provide staff development activities on equity issues.

GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

There was a need to:

- Determine why students follow “traditional” roles.
- Assist students in understanding issues of gender and color.
- Involve parents in career exploration and career choices.
- Dispel “traditional” roles in the minds of parents.
- Assist students in attaining a better understanding of career choices, employment possibilities and the salaries/benefits associated with the jobs.
- Promote non-traditional career related conferences and field trips.
- Regularly provide non-traditional career options through guest speakers, student registrations for courses, and career fairs.

TEACHERS

There was a need to:

- Assist students to understand issues of gender and color and the related terminology.
- Discuss career opportunities and relate all areas of the curriculum to career choices.
- Provide information on the changing roles of men and women in the family and in the work place.
- Incorporate the topics of sex discrimination, stereo-typing, and all types of bias into the regular course content and hold discussions on these topics whenever possible.

C. The Critique of the Survey Results

After reviewing the survey results, it was obvious that students view themselves in traditional roles. However, it is unclear exactly who is influencing their opinions. Although all 8th graders are taking the same courses and are provided the same experiences, career choices and course selections continued to follow traditional role patterns. Administrators and teachers believed that the students were not aware of gender issues and the related terminology. Therefore, the students would fall into the traditional roles without thinking about the other options that were available to them.

Career and role awareness needed to be infused throughout the curriculum. Although students knew that they could enroll in any class, guidance counselors had to impress upon students that all occupational choices were available to them. They had to explore their interests, research possible choices and compare them with their expected life standards. Furthermore, we needed to start at a younger age (Seniors were more aware than Sophomores) thereby providing more value to a high school education.

The greatest disparity appeared to be in self-awareness issues. Although there was a high level of agreement, females appeared to feel better about themselves, valued the

importance of being independent and economically self-sufficient, and were more willing to try new and different things. They seemed to feel they could be whatever they wanted to be. This may have been due to the low economic conditions that still seem to plague the community. Males seemed pessimistic about finding work and supporting a family. Females had an optimism that things would get better. This created an environment where more females looked beyond the high school diploma and sought career training.

IV. STATEMENT OF NEED

A. Summary of Needs

STUDENTS

There is a need to:

1. Help middle school students understand the connection between exploratory courses and their future goals;
2. Dispel traditional gender roles and build self-esteem in non-traditional occupations; and
3. Encourage more females to enter into technology courses and related careers.

ADMINISTRATORS:

There is a need to:

1. Provide staff development activities on equity issues;
2. Ensure the incorporation of all equity issues within the curriculum; and
3. Provide opportunities for students, staff and the community to discuss equity issues.

GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

There is a need to:

1. Assist students in better understanding career choices, employment possibilities and the salaries/benefits associated with jobs;
2. Present non-traditional career options on a regular basis through guest speakers, student registration for courses, and through career fairs; and
3. Assist students in understanding gender and racial issues, and all forms of bias and discrimination.

TEACHERS

There is a need to:

1. Discuss career opportunities and relate the curriculum to career choices;
2. Assist students in understanding all forms of bias and discrimination;
3. Incorporate topics of sex discrimination, stereo-typing, bias and other forms of discrimination into regular course content and classroom discussions.

B. The Critique of the Needs Statement

The top priority, based on the survey results, was to make staff and students more aware of gender equity issues. The needs statements also reflected this priority. It was evident during the survey that students were not aware of the issues and asked many questions regarding terminology, sex discrimination and sexual bias. They were unaware of the reasons why students in the middle school were being required to take exploratory courses in technology education. With revisions to the curriculum, discussions during class instruction and consultation with guidance staff, students should now become more aware and understand the benefit of all students participating in the exploratory courses at the middle school.

Unfortunately, few females continue to take technology courses in high school. Although it has been determined that there is interest due to the freshman course requirements, there is little time available in the schedule. The Equity Planning Committee should encourage discussion of this problem by the high school staff. Modifications should be made to accommodate students who wish to continue in technology related education.

It is important that the district provide staff development activities on all equity issues. With administrators and teachers more aware of the issues and possible solutions, changes can be made in curriculum and instruction that will meet the needs of the district.

V. ACTION PLAN

A. Short Term Goals

1. The district will plan and support staff development activities on equity issues.
2. The staff will have a better understanding of the issues, will explore possible solutions and will be able to recognize biased instructional material.
3. Student handbooks will include an explanation of the enrollment of all students in the middle school in exploratory classes.
4. All teachers will relate their instruction to careers and lead students in discussion of career opportunities.
5. Both males and females will be encouraged to enroll in non-traditional courses.
6. Students will have the opportunity to participate in non-traditional career fairs and/or field trips.

B. Objectives

1. To plan and support staff development activities on equity issues.

STRATEGY: Use the existing in-service time for providing staff development activities.

ACTIVITY: Sensitize the staff to equity in curriculum, teaching methods and classroom activities. Involve teachers in implementing the action plan for equity.

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE: Administrators & supervisors

TIMELINE: Academic Year

MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

- a. Comfort level of students in the classroom.
- b. Implementation of an action plan.
- c. Bias-free curriculum and school environments.

2. To provide an explanation in the PCS student handbook for placing all students in the middle school in exploratory classes.

STRATEGY: Include statements in the PCS student handbook and distribute to all middle school students.

ACTIVITY: Homeroom teachers will carefully review the section in the PCS student handbook dealing with exploratory classes and the reason for all students being enrolled in the program.

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE: Building Principal and PCS Teachers.

TIMELINE: Student Orientation during first week of school

MEASURE OF SUCCESS: Students' understanding of their placement in exploratory classes.

3. To cause teachers to relate their instruction to careers and lead students in discussion of career opportunities and to encourage males and females to enroll in non-traditional courses.

STRATEGY: Provide inservice activities that train teachers to relate their instruction to career goals which offer bias-free opportunities.

ACTIVITY: Sensitize staff to equity in curriculum, teaching methods, classroom activities and career goals.

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE: Administrators and Teachers

TIMELINE: Academic Year

MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

- a. Comfort level of students in classroom
- b. Implementation of an action plan
- c. Bias-free curriculum and school environment

4. To provide students with the opportunity to participate in a non-traditional career fair and/or field trip.

STRATEGY: Provide funding for students and chaperones to attend at least one non-traditional career fair and/or field trip.

ACTIVITY: To attend a non-traditional career fair and/or field trip.

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE: Guidance Department Chairpersons

TIMELINE: Academic Year

MEASURE OF SUCCESS: Evaluation of experiences by participants.

C. Long Term Goals

1. An emphasis on equity will be made throughout the development or revision of curriculum goals and objectives.
2. The administration will request that the high school consider the possibility of increasing the requirements for graduation so that students would have a better opportunity to enroll in technology, business, and family and consumer education courses.

D. Summary

Equity must be an integral part of the district's curriculum in order to eliminate sex discrimination, stereo-typing, and all forms of discrimination or bias. It must be a priority of curriculum revision. Instructional goals and objectives will be included that will sensitize staff and students to all issues of equity.

The long term goals of the action plan will take time and work to implement but the district has begun to review curriculum in this manner. High school staff must discuss the increase of graduation requirements in order to expand student opportunity.