

Multicultural Diversity and the Janesville School System

Background

The League of Women Voters of Janesville, Wisconsin, in 1993 created a position that supported an emphasis on multicultural educational efforts in the Janesville School District. We recognize and support the work of the Janesville School District to bring greater understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism throughout the entire school system.

- Five years ago the District Equity Leadership Team (DELT) was formed. The purpose was to work to close the cultural/racial achievement gap in the District. The progress toward closing the racial/cultural achievement gap is reflected in the District Report Card as published in the Janesville Gazette and on the DPI website.
- New history textbooks have been introduced in the classrooms at all levels. The new books acknowledge the perspective of persons of color. In many chapters history is viewed through the eyes of the minority.
- The Library Media Specialist works hard to make available books written by authors from racially and culturally diverse backgrounds.
- There is now some racial/ethnic diversity in the Central Office Staff and in the individual building Administrative and teaching staff.
- The Platinum Plan was introduced to the weekly mandatory staff development two years ago. It has three components: White Privilege or Unconscious Bias; Poverty and Culturally Responsive Teaching.
- Currently there are six Youth Advocate Staff members who have been hired to coach and mentor students of color. Their goal is to help students of color succeed.
- March of 2008 a scholarship committee was created which is now administered by the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin. They raise funds to pay up to \$5,000 tuition for five years for minority students from Parker and Craig High Schools who will work toward a degree in Education. The students are required to apply to teach in the Janesville District. Currently a 2013 graduate is teaching at Edison School, a second student graduated in January, 2014 and four more students are on schedule to graduate in June, 2014.

The League of Women Voters, Janesville supports and encourages the following actions:

- Because Latinos are conspicuously absent from leadership and teaching roles within the District, there will be a strong effort to recruit Latinos for these positions since 11% of the students are Latino.
- The Platinum Plan needs to be expanded. We suggest it be offered a minimum of four to five times a year in every building.
- The Janesville School Board will be aware of these changes and become vocal in support of them.