

March 21, 2011 Forum: "Dare to Be Real": A Community Discussion on Racial Diversity in Edina Schools, presented by Southview Middle School teen group, "Dare to be Real".

Welcome and opening remarks by Ric Dressen, including:

- Focus on Edina district education mission to create partnerships between home and community and to educate all individuals in the system.
- Core values including integrity, compassion, courage, and commitment to appreciate diversity.
- Introduction of Dare to Be Real Group's focus on race equity in Edina, diversity; an opportunity to dream about what could be.

Patrick Duffy, Southview Assistant Principle, spoke of a framework for the group; four agreements in a conversation about race:

1. To stay engaged
2. To speak our truth
3. To experience discomfort
4. To expect and accept that we will not reach closure

"Our best learning happens when we are in a place of discomfort."

"Silence gives consent."

He described how we each enter into a discussion about race from a different perspective: from the soul (believing); from the heart (feeling); from the head (thinking) or from the hands and feet (action.) He encouraged us to be cognizant and sensitive to these differences.

Mr. Duffy asked each of us to describe our:

- Nationality
- Ethnicity
- Race

And he spoke of how race in the U.S. is the first way we know someone, visually. Whereas ethnicity and cultural identity are something we learn about after getting to know a person better.

The "Dare to Be Real" panel of students was then introduced, and asked to reflect individually on two questions:

1. Why do they think it's important to talk about race in Edina?
 2. How has this involvement in Dare to be Real impacted them personally?
- A. (Ms. Morales): has experienced that she can make a positive difference and offer a "safe place" for others. She has also become more loving of others and of their differences. She wants to educate those who taunt about how words can affect their peers.
 - B. Hunter: How can we stop racism if we don't talk about it? Self-reflection.
 - C. Natasha: Dare to be Real offers a place to talk to people about her experience. Race is an important part of our identity and we need to talk about it.
 - D. Alec: has noticed that people don't accept differences. Before joining this group, he wasn't aware of racial issues.
 - E. Daisy: realized working together we can make a difference. And, education is key.
 - F. Shane: Edina is ill informed about race, and has a narrow view of the world around them. Edina needs this group to open eyes. He feels a need in any community to educate the majority about the minority.
 - G. Kavante: illustrated how people perceive him differently than his white friend because he is black.
 - H. Channel: wasn't aware of racism here, but now is more aware of it.
 - I. Daesham: this group teaches him to be a leader. More aware of racism.
 - J. Liam: mentions how, since joining this group, he is much more aware of hurtful comments directed to friends of color, and the struggle with how to respond: comfort the friend? Or confront the oppressor? Since joining this group, he has learned how to do both.

- K. Tom: People don't think about how their words can hurt others. He feels that because of Dare to be Real, he has impacted others. The outreach with Dare to be Real: start a conversation
- L. Angela: anecdotal stories and her shock as assumptions that because she was from Chicago originally, she must have been in a gang. Need for journey to awareness.

Anthony Galloway from West Metro Education Program: speaking to Edina's role as leaders in the conversation about equity. He showed a film illustrating various WMEP partner communities' programs to address issues of racial inequity in education.

- A. Eden Prairie: The Brotherhood Group
- B. Richfield: Enrichment programs: teacher are trained to take educational cues from their students
- C. Minneapolis: "100 strong who care": inspirational models explain path to success to kids who might not be able to visualize the possibilities
- D. St. Louis Park: restorative justice. "The Circle Process": teacher's respect gives students a sense of community outside of their immediate family.
- E. Hopkins: higher education readiness studies equity and inclusion. "Student Success Program" and "High School readiness program" break down barriers to be successful.
- F. Columbia Heights: encore arts programs
- G. Robbinsdale: AVID program: provides skills students need to be successful
- H. Edina: Southview: Dare to be Real: committed to being anti-racist leaders. Creates opportunities for awareness about racism. Nurtures creative learning. Students learn to hold conversations where they might feel uncomfortable. Intercultural/inter-racial conversations are happening here. Edina is building student anti-racist leaders.

Then, students share their dreams for racial equity in Edina: (by person)

1. Students of all colors learn to value their own, and other's races and ethnicities.
2. Dare to be Real won't be needed.
3. We will value character instead of racial identities.
4. There will be no Mexican stereotypes.
5. Friend groups will consist of diverse ethnicities.
6. Awareness of racism and strength to fix it.
7. Southview will get an award for least racism and bullying.
8. No one will ever feel their opinion doesn't matter.
9. Discrimination will be a thing of the past.
10. Edina will have a reputation for reaching all students.
11. Students of all colors will live together without racism.
12. All kids will be treated equally by everyone.
13. No student will leave this school because of discrimination.
14. Students will be judged for their character and personality.
15. We will understand the impact of racism and culture on everyone.
16. Dream that black and white friends will be judged equally and without discrimination.

Closing: Ric Dressen and a request to comment on:

- A. A Dream for myself.
- B. Action that I request from the District.