

Gender Notes

A newsletter to support Gender Healthy Schools in Boston and Cambridge—a project funded by the Schott Foundation.

Gender Equity Institute Launches Second Year of Mini-Grants Program

The September 22-23 kick-off event for the 2000-2001 “Gender Equity Mini-Grants Program” (aka the “Gender Healthy Schools Project”) attracted over 60 teachers, principals, administrators, and other educators. The two-day Gender Equity

Institute at Northeastern University officially began the second year of this effort, funded by the Caroline and Sigmund Schott Foundation, which this year has awarded over \$250,000 in grants to 22 teams of teachers to support the development of gender healthy public schools in Boston and Cambridge. This

gathering reflected the excitement surrounding these grants and the importance of the work these teams are doing. As many noted at the Institute, this effort truly could become a model for other programs around the country.

Opening remarks at the session on September 22nd were provided by Shirley Mark, Program Manager, the Schott Foundation; James Fraser, Dean of Northeastern University’s School of Education; and Katherine Hanson, Managing Director of the Gender and Diversities Institute at Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). EDC will provide train-

ing to the teacher-teams in implementing and evaluating their projects throughout the year including customized technical assistance, professional development, and networking opportunities. Susan J. Smith, Director of the technical assistance team, served as moderator. Among the guests were representatives from the Superintendents’ offices in Boston and Cambridge including Juliette Johnson, Deputy Superintendent for Clusters and School Leaders, Boston Public Schools; Kharis McLaughlin, Affirmative Action Director, Cambridge Public Schools; and Wendell C. Bourne, Coordinator of Multicultural Curriculum and Programs. The Schott Foundation President Greg Jobin-Leeds also attended.

The opening day also featured an inspiring keynote address, “Equity: The Key to Excellence,” by Dolores A. Grayson, Executive Director of GrayMill Consulting and creator of the nationally recognized GESA (Generating Expectations for Student Achievement) program. Excerpts from her speech are featured in this newsletter (see p. 3).

On Day Two, the grantees engaged in teambuilding activities that began with an interactive workshop with Dr. Grayson on “Gender Equity Basics.” The technical assistance team of the project (Director Susan Smith and Research Associate Ambika Kapur) also reviewed the Gender and Diversities Institute services available to grantees and discussed preliminary plans for the year. The Reflective Action Research team, Director Maria-Paz Avery and Research Associate Marianne Castano, offered guidelines for planning and evaluation for the year. The grantees spent the rest of the day networking with other teams and working with their team members to plan for their projects. ❖

2000-2001 Calendar of Events

December 2000

Professional Development Meeting: “Gender Equity Issues for Men and Boys” with Craig Flood

January 2001

Advisory Committee Meeting

February

Professional Development Meeting (online)

March

Professional Development Meeting: “Generating Expectations for Student Achievement (GESA)”
3-day session with Dolores Grayson

April

Advisory Committee Meeting

May / June

Regional Meeting / End of Year Event

Fall 2000

Issue #1

Sharing the news of the
Schott Foundation
project in Boston and
Cambridge Public
Schools.

Caroline and Sigmund Schott Foundation Gender Equity Mini-Grant Program

The 2000-2001 projects address frequently discussed gender equity issues like sexual harassment; increasing girls' participation in math, science, and technology; and nontraditional career education. They also include issues that are just beginning to emerge nationally such as gender issues in bilingual education, media, and the arts, as well as cultural differences. The grants include support for professional development for teachers, counselors, and administrators; strengthening and expanding the network of activists and advocates for gender equity; and raising awareness of gender inequities among district administrators, principals, policy makers, parents, and the public. ❖

2000-2001 Grantees

Addressing Sexual Harassment in a Comprehensive Way

Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Cambridge, MA

Team Leader: Eileen Taxe-Levine

"Agaseed": Monthly Seed Meetings at the Agassiz

Agassiz School, Cambridge, MA

Team leader: Karma Paoletti

Bridging the Gaps

Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, Boston, MA

Team Leader: Emily Hewett

Cambridgeport School Project

Cambridgeport, MA

Team Leader: Sarah Fiarman

Cambridge SEED Program I

Cambridge, MA

Team Leader: Sue Kranz

Cambridge SEED Program II

Cambridge, MA

Team Leader: Jose Salgado

Charlestown Girls Project

Charlestown High School, Charlestown, MA

Team Leader: Teresa Feeney

Connecting With Science, Math, Engineering and Technology

Dorchester, MA

Team Leader: Caren S. Walker

Creating a New Learning and Teaching Community: The Dever Elementary School Crosses Barriers to Equity

Paul A. Dever Elementary School, Jamaica Plain, MA

Team Leader: Berta Berriz

Fenway/BARCC Initiative in "Teaching Teens About Sexual Violence"

Fenway High School, Boston, MA

Team Leader: Francine Locker

Gender Equity Across Cultures: Raising Consciousness to Improve Students' Confidence

Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Cambridge, MA

Team Leader: Marly Mitchell

Gender and Literacy Acquisition

Harriet Baldwin School, Boston, MA

Team leader: Elizabeth Brooks

Gender in the Media: Fact or Fiction?

Fenway High School, Boston, MA

Team Leader: Bernadette Manning

MCAS - SEED Seminar

Dorchester High School, Dorchester, MA

Team Leader: Patricia C. Morrus

Millennium Project

Martin Luther King Middle School, Dorchester, MA

Team Leader: Ron Bennett

Mind, Body, and Soul II

James Michael Curly Elementary School, Jamaica Plain, MA

Team Leader: Lambros Alex Pappas

Race, Class and Gender in Humanities

Boston Arts Academy, Boston, MA

Team Leader: Anne Clark

Rites of Passage

The Harbor School, Dorchester, MA

Team Leader: Eva Mitchell

Science Club for Girls

King and King Open School, Cambridge, MA

Team Leader: Mary Memmott

Sexual Harassment and Peer Prevention Project

Brighton High School, Brighton, MA

Team Leader: Denis Gray

Slur-Free Environment: Alternatives to Name-Calling and Bullying

Tobin School, Cambridge, MA

Team Leader: Emmy Howe

Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Team

Young Achievers School, Jamaica Plain, MA

Team Leader: Folashade Cromwell

There are 22 grantees in the Boston and Cambridge, Mass. schools.

The following article is excerpted from a speech by Dolores A. Grayson, Ph.D. on September 22, 2000 in Boston, Mass. The speech text in its entirety will be available on the forthcoming Gender Healthy Schools Project's website.

In a recent interview, Kerry Kennedy Cuomo discussed a new book she has written on people who have spent their lives working for civil and human rights and social justice issues. She identified some of the characteristics the people in her book had in common. The first item was courage, the next was a deep and abiding love for people, the third was a sense of responsibility and a need to be of service to others and finally, she stressed that all of the people in her book had a profound spiritual connection or belief in a universal force or spiritual source. . . .

As I prepared for this presentation I considered the power of the title. During the last several years it has become more and more popular to use the words equity and excellence as though they might be mutually exclusive. As the school improvement and educational reform efforts have gained higher visibility in the media and in political circles, we hear a lot about excellence with tag lines about equity or diversity. For our purposes here I want to emphasize that I feel very strongly that equity must be a criterion for excellence. That means that any efforts toward educational excellence or workplace excellence or societal and community excellence, however defined, must include equity as a requirement. For example, all planning efforts need to include an equity impact analysis. What are the issues of fairness and how will all people involved be affected or impacted by the decision, program, practice, facility, policy, etc. being changed, designed or implemented.

When we think of excellence we usually associate words and phrases like quality, high standards, high expectations, achievement and success. In education we have indicators of excellence. Traditionally, we consider the top three to five percent, measured in a totally competitive way against others and limited to a few. . . . There is a need for a more inclusive approach to educational excellence, to the way we define it and the ways we measure and assess it—definitions and measurements that include equity, that consider civil rights and human rights for all of our students and employees. By definition, equality means same or comparable and most of our anti-discrimination mandates ad-

dress the areas in which there are tangible needs for equality. These include comparable opportunities, facilities, budgets, equipment, qualified teachers and coaches and access to a range of classes addressing advanced as well as remedial skill levels. We need on-going procedures, policies and monitoring of these efforts to ensure equality. And we need to move beyond the equality levels that meet the letter of the laws to the equity levels that exemplify the spirit of the laws. Equity by definition is related to fairness and justice. We need to continue to strive for more fair treatment of students, more relevant course content and more reflective and honest educational materials.

Almost fifty years ago we decided that separate was not equal with the landmark ruling in 1954, *Brown vs. the Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*. This decision initiated some major changes and a number of legal mandates regarding race, ethnicity, gender, disability, language, socio-economic status and other parallel equity concerns. During the last twenty-five years there has been a great deal of research related to schooling, classroom practices, instruction, curriculum and the learning and work environment and the correlation to achievement or excellence. We know much more than we have ever known about educating females and males from diverse populations, backgrounds and cultures.

In my work on Generating Expectations for Student Achievement (GESA), I've concentrated on perceptions, expectations, interactions and achievement with an emphasis on gender, ethnicity and other equity influences. We've identified major areas of disparity, research based classroom strategies and new ways of measuring excellence. The educational equity movement has resulted in the consideration of diverse ways of knowing and processing and learning. It is an acknowledged fact that people process information differently and whether one is reading studies rooted in feminist pedagogy, learning styles, multiple intelligence or brain research, we have accepted the need for al-

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ternative and authentic assessment. Equity related research is no longer marginalized. In educational research, we have expanded from exclusive quantitative studies to recognize the significance of qualitative, ethnographic and phenomenological data. We know that multiple modalities are the most effective. The difficulties often arise from our inability and/or unwillingness to apply and use our own research.

We need to do a better job of linking research to practice and that's one of the reasons that all of your projects funded by the Schott Foundation are so important. The evaluation or "reflective action research" component is critical to ensuring that the lessons learned about gender equity can be shared, as pointed out by Maria-Paz B. Avery, the project director for the evaluation component. In this way, the projects can build leadership and increase advocacy for gender equity in the Boston and Cambridge public schools and serve as a model for other areas.

I was asked to include what I perceived to be areas of major movement around the country related to excellence with equity as a key ingredient. As I've indicated in my previous comments, accountability and assessment for increased standards are a primary target area. In addition, I would include technology and processing information and work and career preparation. These are the areas of interest that are driving policy and decision-makers and much of the funding.

The emerging equity related issues and challenges include the recent attempt at polarization in the media and the practice of featuring selective research such as Christina Hoff Sommer's work in which she pits male issues against female issues. I find it ironic that she attempts to challenge and counter research on gender equity by such respected stalwarts as my friend and colleague, the late Myra Sadker. Myra was one of the first researchers to address the cost of sex bias for boys *and* girls. In fact, some of the very facts

Sommers quotes regarding her alleged war on boys are the results of biases first identified by Myra in her early Report Cards on schools. Anyone who is familiar with the work of those of us who have been involved in this research area for over twenty-five years knows that there are two sides to the gender equity coin. In my own work, I've always stressed the importance of looking at gender disparity impact on females *and* males and the psychological and emotional prices paid by anyone who scores high on Sex Role Stereotype (SRS) assessments and attribution scales. Since the 80's when Sandra Bem developed the Sex Role Inventory (SRI) appraisal, psychologists have known that high scores for either extreme were predictors for psychological and emotional difficulties. These have been validated as predictors of such difficulties and for males who score high on SRS assessments, the odds are greater that the path may lead to criminal and violent behavior.

This leads to another emerging issue, which is the area of violence and safety at school and in the workplace. It is time to move beyond conflict resolution and apply what we've learned in a more preventative way at earlier stages of intervention. Other emerging research and media issues include pitting racial, ethnic and cultural groups against each other; a focus on indigenous populations vs. settler/developer populations vs. newcomers/immigrants and the cross cultural conflicts, changing culture and gender roles, the blending and separation of traditions and language concerns.

For those of us who work on equity the focus must be on mutual respect, dignity, understanding, harmony and unity. That's why your efforts are so important. They are solution oriented and designed as capacity-building models at the local level. As indicated in the beginning, involvement in this work will continue to take courage, love, a sense of responsibility and service to others, spiritual centeredness and a sincere belief in excellence for all. . . . ❖

The projects can build leadership and increase advocacy for gender equity in the Boston and Cambridge public schools and serve as a model for other areas.

Eligible activities will be those that include clear learning objectives and the use of appropriate teaching and learning techniques.

Professional Development Points (PDPs)

At the recent Gender Equity Institute, many of you requested that the Gender Healthy Schools Project consider awarding PDPs for participation in the technical assistance and training events EDC will be sponsoring. EDC is recognized as a professional development provider by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education and is, therefore, able to offer PDPs in accordance with the Department's guidelines. Details on how and when PDPs are to be awarded were discussed in the recent Gender Healthy Schools Project Advisory Committee meeting.

Each hour of attendance at an EDC-sponsored activity related to this project will qualify for one PDP. Eligible activities will be those that include clear learning objectives and the use of appropriate teaching and learning techniques. Examples of such eligible activities are the September Gender Equity Institute, the upcoming GESA training with Dr. Dee Grayson, and content-based, focused onsite technical assistance such as individualized sessions with the Reflective Action Research team. However, the recent onsite visits with grantees that the Technical Assistance Team and the Reflective Action Research Team had are not eligible as they were meant to be informative meetings.

An example of how many PDPs may be accumulated by an individual grantee is as follows. People who attended the September Gender Equity Institute (8 hours) and who participate in the upcoming 3-Day GESA Training (24 hours) may accumulate a total of 32 hours or 32 PDPs.

In order to qualify for PDPs, however, the individual must have at least 10 hours of professional development on a specific topic. In

this case, the specific topics are gender equity and reflective action research. In addition, the individual must demonstrate proficiency in the subject either through the submission of a product or participation in an end-of-course assessment. For this project, the final report submitted by the project team at the end of the year to the Schott Foundation and EDC will qualify as the product. The expectation is that the final report will be developed as a team effort in which each team member assumes responsibility for some aspect of the report.

In order to be credited the appropriate number of hours, it is important that each person assume the responsibility of personally signing in at each event. As a professional development provider, EDC is required to maintain a record of attendance, evaluations of activities, and the final products.

Certificates of completion will be awarded at the end of the academic year. ❖

Reflective Action Research Onsite Visits

Another recommendation that came out of the October Advisory Board meeting had to do with the reflective action research component of the project. It was suggested that the assistance that would be most helpful to projects at this point in time was onsite working sessions with the team. These onsite sessions would provide opportunities for focused problem-solving and be tailored to the specific issues of each project. Maria-Paz Avery and Marianne Castano, the Reflective Action Research Team, will contact team leaders either by phone or email to schedule these onsite visits. ❖

Gender Healthy Schools

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Gender Notes Newsletter

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Gender Healthy Schools

The Gender Healthy Schools Project (aka Gender Equity Mini-Grants Program) supports school communities where children are free from sexism and gender biases that inhibit academic achievement. Funded by the Caroline and Sigmund Schott Foundation, the project currently includes 22 teams of teachers from the Boston and Cambridge Public Schools that have received grants for professional development; strengthening and expanding the network of activists and advocates for gender equity; and raising awareness of gender inequities among district administrators, principals, policy makers, parents, and the public. Staff from the Gender and Diversities Institute at Education Development Center, Inc. provides training to the teacher-teams in implementing and evaluating their projects. ❖