

OUR MISSION:

To build and sustain a community that is racially, culturally, and socially integrated and truly inclusive, where there is equity and equality for all.

OUR VISION:

We aspire to be a community that is a model for the nation, in which people of different races, ethnic groups, and backgrounds can interact, form friendships, and participate fully in the economic, political, civic, educational, and cultural life of the community.

OUR GOAL:

The school district is stably integrated overall, within academic levels, and schools. Students of all races are expected and encouraged to excel in a community that is proud and supportive of its students.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

1. Continue to partner with and challenge the district administration to recruit and retain teachers that reflect the racial and cultural makeup of students and encourage the district to explore ongoing cultural competency/anti-bias training of staff.
2. Continue to inform the discussion of the Minority Achievement Gap and promote strategies to narrow the gap
3. Continue to promote parent advocacy, foster student empowerment, family awareness of benefits of social integration of children, and encourage community engagement in our schools and preschools.



SCHOOLS COMMITTEE

516 Prospect Street
Maplewood, NJ 07040
973.761.6116

For additional information, please visit:

www.twotowns.org

2017 Edition



SCHOOLS COMMITTEE



Co-chairs:

*Carol Barry-Austin
Meredith Sue Willis*

Contact: meredithsuewillis@gmail.com
carolba321@aol.com

Meeting Schedule: *Monthly
First Tuesday 7:00 PM
South Orange Middle School
All are welcome!*

AT A GLANCE

Aim High! Focus on the Minority Achievement Gap Program received the 2007 New Jersey Association of Partners in Education and New Jersey Association of School Administrators “Exemplary Program Award for School Partnerships Award.” This program focuses attention on the racial minority achievement gap in our schools in order to develop solutions.

Top Ten Tips for Achieving Academic Success brochures support parent engagement for elementary and middle school parents. The high school brochure, designed by CHS students, supports student empowerment. Brochures distributed throughout the school district. Spanish, French, & Creole translations for elementary school parents released in Spring 2013.

Talking to Children about Race, a community discussion designed to help parents develop strategies for talking to their children about race-related issues. (2011)



Major Community Forums with nationally recognized speakers; thousands of residents attended and participated in small group discussions: Beverly Daniel Tatum, author, *Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (1999); Dr. Ronald Ferguson from Harvard, *Closing the Achievement Gap: Challenges, Questions, Solutions* (2002); Juan Williams, author & journalist, *The Legacy of Brown vs. The Board of Education* (2004); Filmmakers Marco Williams & Whitney Dow, *I Sit Where I Want, The Legacy of Brown v. Board of Education*, co-sponsored with the All-state Foundation, and *Facing History* and

Ourselves (2005); Professor John A. Powell, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, *Integration Matters!* (2007).

Annual BOE Candidates' Forum gives candidates an opportunity to answer questions about providing excellence and equity for all students in our diverse district as well as addressing questions on integrative practices.



Highlighting Columbia High School: Facts, Fears, or Folklore? Focused attention on CHS in 2006, 2007, and 2012 to provide parents and other residents with a real sense of what it's like to be a student at our community's outstanding high school.

New Teacher Orientation: each year since 2005 we have presented information about diversity in our district and the community's commitment to intentional integration. To support an increase in minority hires, we were invited to be part of district team at a Minority Teacher Hiring Exposition in NY.

Parent Advocacy Workshop, *Effectively Advocating for Your Student* workshops conducted throughout the district.

Annual Preschool Open House developed to assist parents in selecting the best preschool for their youngsters and to inform parents of kindergarten readiness expectations in the school district. Sponsored annually for 15 years.

Achievement Gap 101 educated the community about the achievement gap through a series of presentations. Published informational rack card to define the gap. (2013)

Achievement Gap Study Circles used the study circle national model to develop a 4 week series for district staff and the greater community. Readings focused on achievement gap issues relevant to our district. Visit our website for bibliography. (2005)

Math Frenzy Summer Program provided support for rising sixth graders who were below grade level in math. District elementary school principals selected students. (2003)

Planning Ahead Workshops helped middle school parents understand district leveling and the importance of planning in advance for high school and beyond. (2002, 2003, 2015)

Community Stakeholder All-day Seminar hosted to create partnerships with stakeholders in our communities – including governmental bodies, school district staff and administration, police and fire departments, libraries, faith-based organizations, and Seton Hall University. (2002)

Cultural Competency Workshops provided community and district staff with information, experiences and discussion about how to enhance student learning and become more culturally sensitive. Workshops hosted in partnership with the American Conference on Diversity (2013) and most recently with Dr. Khyati Joshi (2016).

Integrated Playgroup Through informal monthly meet-ups, the Integrated Play Group brings together like-minded parents and their children ages 6 months to five years. The children play and learn respect and appreciation for the diversity of ethnicity and race. The parents, too, build new relationships, and our community moves further along the path from diversity to true integration.

