

Focus Groups FAQ's



In May of 2016, conversations were held in the South Washington County School District with black families at the secondary level. This document includes the most frequently asked questions from those sessions. South Washington County Schools will continue to hold conversations with diverse populations in the district.

1. **What is the diversity of current students in District 833?**

Visit the following link to view our District 833 Demographics Chart:

[http://www.sowashco.org/files/department/communications/files/District 833 Demographics.pdf](http://www.sowashco.org/files/department/communications/files/District%20833%20Demographics.pdf)

2. **What effort is the district doing to recruit a diverse workforce?**

One of the District 833 priority statements in the strategic plan is to move from 5.6 % diverse employees to 8% diverse employees by June 30th, 2017.

Actions steps:

- Recruit candidates by increased attendance and presence at out-of-state job fairs.
- Recruit more diverse candidates by utilizing a greater variety of recruitment resources such as job boards, social media, etc. Also better recruitment by advertising in local papers/job boards with high diversity population
- Develop stronger relationships with colleges offering certifications/degrees in hard to fill areas
- Diversity committee has made connections with historically black colleges and universities to build partnerships for recruitment.

3. **What are Community/Cultural Liaisons and what do they do in our schools?**

Community/Cultural Liaisons help to connect District 833, families and the community. They are advocates for equity and inclusion, empowering and supporting families to promote student academic success. Community/Cultural Liaisons assist and support students and families with cultural adjustment and social emotional development, and they work in collaboration within school staff, families and the community. Please click the link below for more information.

<http://www.sowashco.org/academics/educational-equity-integration/cultural-liaisons>

4. **Why are only some students selected to meet with Cultural Liaisons?**

Cultural Liaisons are accessible to all students. A staff member or parent can request support from the cultural liaisons for students as well. The contact information can be found on our website at the following link:

5. What is being done about cultural awareness among staff?

One of the District 833 priority statements in the strategic plan is that 90% of all employees will participate in at least one Professional Development activity regarding cultural competency or enhancing work climate/culture.

Actions steps:

- System Leaders will participate in 20 hours of professional development focused on core components of trust, communication, shared mission and purpose, employee recognition and diversity/cultural competence
- System Leaders required book study will be *The Will to Lead and Skill to Teach* by Sharroky Hollie and Anthony Muhammad.
- Large group System Leaders meetings will focus on: Students in Poverty, Deepening Trust and Accountability work begun in 2015-16 (2 sessions), Recognizing and understanding students with disruptive behaviors.
- Speakers scheduled to present to **ALL** employee groups on various topics related to cultural competency and/or enhancing work climate and culture.

6. How do students get into AVID? What are the criteria?

I. **Application** (The same application is used at every school in our district).

Students can apply for AVID by filling out an application any time during the school year. The AVID Elective class is offered in grades 7-12 at all of our secondary schools and additionally in grade 6 at Oltman.

Students can see an AVID teacher or school counselor for an application. During November, December, and January each year, teachers on the AVID Site Team recruit students for the AVID Elective. Any staff member can recommend or encourage a student to apply for AVID.

Students considered for AVID are generally:

- Average or above average in academics
- Underserved in the college system, and/or first-generation college students
- Motivated and determined to participate in honors classes in high school

II. **Interview**

ALL students who complete an application are interviewed.

III. **AVID Site Team Data Dive**

The AVID Site Team compiles the applications, interviews, and transcript data to finalize the list of students who are most qualified for the AVID Elective.

Students are selected and notified.

IV. **AVID Family Nights** are held at every secondary school to provide families with more information about AVID. 5th grade families who will be attending Oltman are also provided an AVID Informational night.

7. What percentage of funding is going to AVID? What other programs are being funded through Equity and Integration?

The Equity and Integration plan can be found on our website detailing the items funded. Click the link below for this information.

<http://www.sowashco.org/files/department/equity/files/ISD833%20Revised%20Integration%20Plan%202014-2017.pdf>

8. What is culturally responsive training (CRT)?

Culturally responsive training is a pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates fundamental cultures and offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures.

Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).