

APRIL
2018

EQUITY
CONNECTOR

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equityalliancemn.org

**AVID Demonstration Schools
Announced This March!**

Inver Grove Heights Middle School, Roseville Middle School, and Roseville High School have been validated as AVID National Demonstration Schools. As some of the selected groups so honored throughout the U.S., these 3 schools are in an elite category among the approximately 5,600 AVID schools in 44 states, the District of Columbia, and 16 countries and U.S. territories. We commend Inver Grove Heights Middle School, Roseville Middle School, and Roseville High School for their efforts on behalf of students whose futures are brighter because of their commitment to them.



Youth Day at the Capitol



On March 27th, students from Equity Alliance’s Youth Executive Board and Culture Club at White Bear Lake participated in Youth Day at the Capitol, an annual event connecting youth, community experts, and local policymakers. Throughout the day, Equity Alliance MN students personally met with several influential Minnesotan legislators, such as Representative JoAnn Ward, Senator Patricia Torres Ray, Senator John Marty and other senators and representatives from student home districts. As they met with their local legislators, Equity Alliance students

expressed their opinions concerning hot-button issues like gun control, human trafficking, educational equity, and mental health programming in schools. The students sat in on National Youth Council hearings, attended an advocacy training, toured the Capitol, and received words of encouragement and praise from their local legislators; in the words of Rep. JoAnn Ward, Equity Alliance is a “great group of kids!! It [was] so exciting to see them so engaged and informed.”



Representative JoAnn Ward,
meeting with Culture Club

**PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING**

Cultural Liaisons Meetings

We will be discussing our roles, sharing training ideas regarding race and culture, and supporting one another in our work. Next meeting is on Thursday, April 19, 2018 7:30am – 10:00am at our offices. Connect with Dr. Mary Bussman for more information mary.bussman@equityalliancemn.org

Upcoming Event

Expand college credit offerings for your bilingual and multi-lingual students through the Minnesota Department of Education’s Seal of Biliteracy program. To learn more about the program, Equity Alliance MN is hosting Ms. Ursula Lentz, MDE’s World Language and English Learner Specialist, Thursday, April 19th from 8:00-9:30 a.m. in the training rooms of Equity Alliance MN. Connect with Dr. Mary Bussman for more information mary.bussman@equityalliancemn.org

Letter to the Editor from Star Tribune

In response to the article written by Katherine Kersten titled, [Undisciplined: Chaos may be coming to Minnesota classrooms, by decree.](#)

Implicit bias is real, and is present in each human being. Banaji and Greenwald, in their book *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*, describe how the brain is wired to unconsciously sort incoming data into categories of information, starting with safety. These categories are developed from our past experiences, the media, the teachings passed down to us, etc. Because so many messages in our society have portrayed Black, Latino, and Native American people as violent, illegal, or lazy, and Whites and Asians as accomplished, any new interaction can get sorted into those respective categories first. We have to consciously unlearn those connections so that biases don't become racist beliefs and actions as described in the article.

To view Dr. Mary Bussman's full response, and other response to the article, [Readers Write: Race and school discipline, gun policy](#)

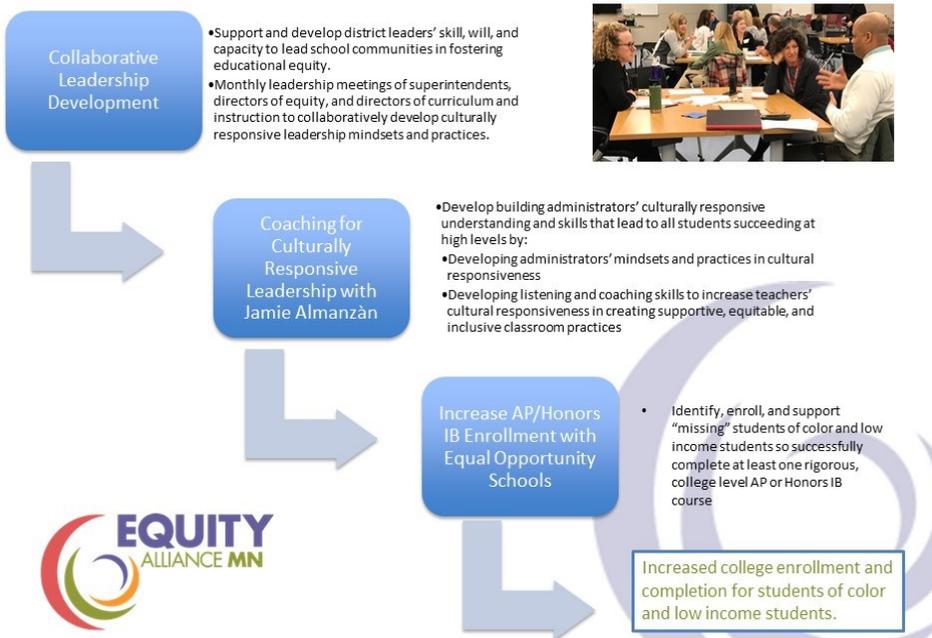
New Summer Program for Middle

Middle School Innovation & Exploration is a two week interactive, hands-on summer program for incoming 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. Equity Alliance MN is partnering with the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management to ignite student's passion for learning and to provide opportunities to explore future endeavors. The purpose of this summer program is to boost students' personal awareness and self-confidence as well as improve problem solving and soft skills. Students will also have numerous opportunities to improve leadership skills and work on college and career readiness through real world applications. The 2-week summer program runs from July 30th-August 9th, Monday-Thursday from 8:30am-2pm. Please call or email **Sarah Neitz** with any questions or to register students. 651-379-2651 or sarah.neitz@equityalliancemn.org

Increasing Enrollment and Success in AP and Honors IB for Students of Color and Youth with Low SES

Several school districts in the east metro have participated in part or all of the components of a project Equity Alliance MN has coordinated. Through our work with Equal Opportunity Schools and consultant Jamie Almanzán, our goal is to increase enrollment of students of color and students living in poverty into college-preparatory courses such as advanced placement and honors International Baccalaureate courses. Equity Alliance MN is hoping to continue this project and expand to other school districts in the alliance with future funding from local and national foundation grants.

Creating Equitable Access to College-Level Courses in East Metro Schools



UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

Visit: equityalliancemn.org for our current calendar of events

- **Mermaid Hour: Remixed** musical production @ Mixed Blood Theaters Thurs. April 12, 10:00am-11:30am
- **High School Retreat** @ Crosswinds School Friday May 4, 4:00pm-8:00pm
- **Lovin' the Skin I'm In Retreat** @ Crosswinds School Friday May 18 4:00pm-8:00pm
- **Under This Roof**, Full Circle Theater Production @ Guthrie Theater date TBD in May
- **YEB Truth Telling** at SPPS Equity Summit @ Johnson High School Sat. April 21, 10:45-11:45

Members of YEB will facilitate a session titled "Being Woke: Centering Youth Voice as Equity Dialogue," discussing how overt and covert forms of racism permeate the education systems, and learning forms of youth solidarity as ways of overcoming racial discrimination and exclusion. Come participate!
SPPS Equity Summit
Johnson Senior High School
Saturday, April 21st
10:45-11:45