

Medford Area Public School District Self-Evaluation of the Status of Pupil Nondiscrimination And Equality of Educational Opportunities November 2018

Introduction to the Medford Area Public School District

The Medford Area Public School District is one of three school districts located in Taylor County, Wisconsin. Taylor County is situated in central Wisconsin. With a total land area of 980 square miles and a population of 20,689 (2010), the person/square mile ratio is 21.1 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In 2014, Taylor County had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$36,503. This PCPI was 84 percent of the state average of \$43,290 (Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis). The Medford Area Public School District is located in the county seat of Medford. Medford is an industrial based community, being home to three national industries and a location for manufacturing for several others. The public school district encompasses 350 square miles. The district is a Grade PK - 12 system, of which the public middle / high school are fed into by two local parochial schools (PK - 6 Catholic school and a PK - 8 Lutheran school). The district operates five buildings and one virtual school. One building houses central office administration and staff. There is a grades 9 - 12 high school, a grades 5 - 8 middle school, two grades PK - 4 elementary schools, and a grades PK - 11 virtual school. The district had an annual budget of \$24,579,655 for the 2017-18 school year and a per pupil cost of \$10,433 (this is \$2,749 less than the 2016-17 state average). In September, 2018, the total district enrollment was reported as 2,162 students. 1,069 students were female and 1093 students were male. Of the students reported, 0.42% were of Asian descent, 1.67% were Black, 7.91% were of Hispanic origin, 1.57% were of American Indian descent, 0.23% were of Pacific Islander descent, 1.48% were of two or more ethnic backgrounds and 86.72% were white.

Pupil Nondiscrimination Policies and Complaint Procedure

The Medford Area Public School District has written and approved policies covering all areas of school operations, including, but not limited to school sponsored programs and activities. This includes a policy prohibiting discrimination against pupils on the basis of any and all the protected categories listed in §118.13. The policies lay out prohibition of discrimination against pupils in the areas set forth in PI 9.103. In addition, the district has an effective complaint procedure for receiving, investigating and promoting corrective action, should there be an alleged complaint under §118.13. Board policies are revised by the district according to policy BFG (Policy Review and Evaluation). This policy requires the board of education to review particular sections of the policy book annually. The pupil nondiscrimination policy (JB) was last revised on September 18, 2014. Pupil nondiscrimination policies are published annually in the district Welcome Back to School Booklet, which is mailed to all school district families/households. In addition, the nondiscrimination policy is published in the local newspaper. The policy designates which employees are to receive, investigate and take corrective action in resolving pupil discrimination complaints. The titles of such persons are published annually in the Welcome Back Booklet, the newspaper and on our website. The forms are included in all parent/student and staff handbooks and course selection handbooks. In addition to the policy, guided by §118.13, there are a number of other policies included by the school district which make reference to or include within their body, the pupil nondiscrimination language. Policies which are required by state statute to include that do so. Other policies make reference to both the state statutes and the policy code used for district recording.

Analysis

All administration, teaching staff, support staff and student body have been made aware of the importance of nondiscrimination as it relates to the quality of school climate. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure pupil harassment will be identified and readily dealt with. Knowledge and awareness has come about through the study and advice of the policy committee, student groups, administrative recommendation and community involvement. The district's complaint procedure clearly explains where and how complaints should be filed, time limits and the process used to investigate such complaints. It further outlines for the complainant the appeal procedure should he/she be dissatisfied with local resolution of his/her complaint. The district's policies, as they appear in handbooks and legal notices, are explained both by administration and the board of education to staff, students and community members.

Methods, Practices, Curriculum and Materials Used in Counseling

The district has a number of school board and building level policies that promote the teaching of diversity and multiculturalism through all methods, practices, curriculum, and materials used through teacher instructional programs and counseling programs. The board's Foundations and Basic Commitment policy section recognizes the importance of nondiscrimination in all facets of the district's programs and services. The district's Educational Philosophy policy (AD) includes a belief statement supporting uniqueness of each student. Finally, the Educational Materials Section and Adoption policy (IIA) provides for the selection of resources that provide a representative view of many religions, ethnic and cultural groups and contributions of such to our American heritage.

The district has specific board policies, as mentioned above, that address the selection of educational materials and teaching resources. The policies address philosophy, procedure, and the appeal process. The policies provide that materials selected shall depict, in an accurate and balance way, the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of our society. The district has a material evaluation form used by staff piloting new teaching material to facilitate implementation of these policies. It requires users to indicate if the instructional materials contain biased illustrations or stereotypical family/career roles. This standard is applied to the adoption of all new educational materials. The new teaching resources adopted by the board, during the curriculum cycle, are purchased for all classrooms. Neither ability grouping nor tracking are used in our district and all students have access to the same educational materials.

The Medford Area Public School District employs a balanced Student Services Staff. We employ two guidance counselors at our high school, one guidance counselor at the middle school, one licensed guidance counselor at the elementary level, a Grades PK-4 School Social Worker, and a Grades 5-12 School Social Worker. Our SES Elementary Principal and MAMS EBD Resource Room Teachers also have DPI licenses as guidance counselors. Our Rural Virtual Academy has two guidance counselors and a school psychologist. We have three Program Support Teachers in the school district who are currently School Psychology Graduate Students through UW Stout. The Director of Special Education/Student Services is also a licensed school psychologist and has filled in for the school psychologists with any prolonged absences. There is a district-wide School Nurse and a School Police Liaison Officer which is shared with the local police department.

We offer a balanced counseling model for students which provides direct counseling services, individual or small group counseling, consultation model with classroom teachers, school based mental health counseling, a developmental guidance curriculum, positive behavioral intervention supports, response to intervention, and/or targeted counseling specific areas across the school district.

A counseling program is provided by certified staff in all buildings. Through the developmental guidance curriculum, the district is able to address stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, tolerance, and a variety of other social interaction topics. The guidance staff teaches this curriculum in the classroom. Counselors provide instruction to students in classrooms, small groups, and/or individually to resolve problems surrounding these topics and other student issues. Cultural diversity and disabilities awareness activities are done on a regular basis.

The school district spent the 16-17 school year planning for the implementation of the PI 26 Education for Employment - Academic and Career Planning model at the onset of the 17-18 school year. Over the past two years we have added an ESL/Bilingual Education Licensed Teacher at the middle and high school level and an ELL licensed elementary teacher in order to provide direct ELL teaching and continued consultation model.

Student Services staff attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities. Guidance Counselors, School Social Workers, School Nurse, and/or Program Support Teachers serve as Section 504 case managers for students in Grades K-12. The Director of Special Education/Student Services, Program Support Teacher, and/or Special Education Case Manager represent the school district as a Local Educational Agency (LEA) Representative at each IEP meeting which they attend. High school counselors meet with all students and provide information, recommendations, and materials that emphasize the courses, programs, roles, and careers which are open to everyone regardless of gender, race, national origin, or disability.

There is active participation by Student Services staff on countywide councils including: Taylor County Transition Advisory Council, Taylor County Mental Health Awareness Council, Taylor County Interagency Communications Committee, Taylor County Autism Support Group, Special Education Advisory Council, and Taylor County Early Childhood Council.

Student Services staff are trained in counseling strategies and techniques. We use strategies that are free from bias and stereotyping. They regularly attend conferences that help provide further training and knowledge in this area bias and stereotyping. They regularly attend conferences that help provide further training and knowledge in this area.

Analysis

The Medford Area Public School District:

- Has policies and procedures which emphasize the equity and diversity are integrated into all aspects of counseling to ensure nondiscrimination;
- Has counselors using a variety of strategies and methods with students which are free from bias or stereotyping;
- Promotes counselors the opportunity to attend and participate in the Taylor County Transition Advisory Council meetings, to help students with disabilities transition into post-secondary schooling and living opportunities;
- Has guidance counselors and school psychologists as case managers of Section 504 plans;
- Offers disabilities awareness and cultural diversity programs run by the counselors;
- Uses a curriculum development and instructional resource selection process that is inclusive and respectful of diversity;
- Trains and instructs all staff to be aware of stereotyping and discrimination – the district addresses these issues in policy and implementation of prevention practices;
- Provides a non-bias curriculum to students in a variety of instructional methods – the district addresses different cultural or racial or disability groups through classroom and school-wide programs; and
- Provides a full service counseling program to all students. Our developmental guidance curriculum addresses equity, both in the classroom and individually. Course offerings are available to all students.

Participation Trends and Patterns and School District Support of Athletic, Extracurricular and Recreational Activities

Athletic, extra-curricular and recreational activity program types and program enrollment data was reviewed and desegregated on the basis of sex, race and academic status. Data was compared to the overall school enrollment to find patterns or trends, which would pinpoint problems in discrimination or equity issues.

- Boys and girls are being treated equitably and fairly in the number of athletic programs available to them (high school - 12 female/11 male, middle school – 8 female / 8 male).
- The difference in the number of boys and girls participating is in the nature of the sports themselves, in addition to the fact that the district provides programs if there is enough interest. Attached is a copy of the athletic participation at both our high school and middle school for a number of years.
- Participation rates or academic extracurricular activities, in general, reflect our population (there was a 6.28% minority population in our high school and a 6.78% minority population district-wide).
- Provision of uniforms, equipment and supplies is done through a rotating basis or on an as needed basis.
- Scheduling of games and practice times are on a 50-50 split with a rotation of Monday – Friday, except for Wednesday.
- Selection of specific sports and levels of competition accommodate the interests and abilities of all to the extent allowed by WIAA and school policy.
- Special accommodations are available to students with disabilities.
- Rules and/or policies are available to sanction or organize a club for groups wishing to seek school-approved status.
- Procedures for choosing courts for homecoming, winter carnival or prom reflect an equitable selection. All are determined by student vote.

The district adopted a student Code of Conduct in the 2014-15 school year for the high school. This code of conduct is used for both athletic and extracurricular/recreational activities.

Analysis

The district has considered whether the activities being examined in this section are relevant to and are supportive of all students. Considering the number of student athletes involved, along with extensive fan support from the student population, as well as the parents and other community members, the athletic programs continue to fill an important student need. All of the academic and general extra-curricular activities show a very similar amount of interest and parent support. There is a great deal of interest for the areas of drama, music, intramurals, clubs, organizations and student government. Our district's nondiscrimination policies and practices, in regards to all of these areas, are available in our policy book and are communicated to students and parents/guardians through the opening of school booklet and student/parent handbooks. This public information is available in Spanish, as well as English. All information regarding athletic, general extracurricular and academic activities can be made available in other languages with new software.

This district does not have a large number of students who are defined by minority classifications (2018-19 third Friday Report in September shows: 49 (7.69%) students (male and female) were of Asian, Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native and two or more ethnic backgrounds, as a part of the 625 students at Medford Area Senior High). When it is perceived that there are interests or needs not being met, that information will be discerned appropriately. It is recommended that we continue to use the policies that are in practice and which comply with WIAA and School Guidelines. The district strives to provide the best for all of our students at all times. It is the finding of this study that the district is achieving the goal of nondiscrimination and equity in support of athletic, extracurricular and recreational activities.

Trends and Patterns in Awarding Scholarships and Other Forms of Recognition and Achievement Provided or Administered by the School District

Scholarships

The general distribution of scholarships was as follows:

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Male	29	35	33	28	28	29	24
Female	36	51	49	45	37	49	45

The 12th grade enrollment for males and females has been as follows:

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Male	98	85	79	86	74	78	71
Female	80	80	71	68	79	82	69

The proportion of scholarships awarded males to females is consistent for 2011-12 thru 2017-18 from past school years and audit reviews. The proportion of scholarships awarded to minorities was 1.54% for 2011-12, 1.16% for 2012-13, 1.23% for 2013-14, 1.37% for 2014-15, 4.55% for 2015-16, 6.4% for 2016-17, and 2.8% for 2017-18. These numbers are consistent with school population and prior year's percentages. Upon review, it was found that the information about scholarship award opportunities was made accessible to all students. The common scholarship application, other award information and the selection process was adjudged to be free of bias, discrimination or stereotyping. At the spring scholarship assembly, all scholarship recipients were introduced and honored.

Athletics

In analyzing the total number of unduplicated males vs. females participating on high school athletic teams during the last number of years, the overall numbers were as follows:

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Male	181	161	163	159	162	174	168
Female	152	153	143	149	157	143	124

There were 12 male sport teams and 11 female sport teams during the 2017-18 school year. All policies and criteria for awarding letters to athletes were found to be objective, reasonable and without bias. The lettering process is monitored by

the athletic director to assure compliance with policies as published in the student handbook. All students may purchase and wear letter jackets, whether or not they participate in athletics or other co-curricular programs.

Academics

Academic Excellence Awards programs were initiated and devised to celebrate the scholarship and academic attainment of students who excel in the classroom. It is parallel to the attention and recognition given to students that participate in athletic programs. Awards are earned as follows:

Senior Graduation Award

Cum Laude is a Latin term that means with honor. It is used to refer to students who have met high academic standards and taken challenging and rigorous coursework. There are three honors that are bestowed on graduates: Cum Laude, which means with honors; Magna Cum Laude, which means with great honor; and Summa Cum Laude, which means with greatest honor. Graduates receiving one of the Laude awards will be given a corresponding medal to wear at graduation.

In order to receive the Cum Laude award, a student must achieve in the following manner:

1. Summa Cum Laude: 4.0 and above cumulative grade point average
Magna Cum Laude: 3.800 – 3.999 cumulative grade point average
Cum Laude: 3.500 – 3.799 cumulative grade point average
2. Take ten (10) semesters of honors or AP courses (excluding Honors Algebra). This was initially prorated for graduating classes, as follows:

2015 – 4 semesters of honors or AP courses
2016 – 6 semesters of honors or AP courses
2017 – 8 semesters of honors or AP courses
2018 and subsequent classes – 10 semesters of honors or AP courses

Honor Rolls

Academic Distinction: 3.800 grade point average and above, based on current semester grades

High Honors: 3.500 – 3.799 grade point average, based on current semester grades

Honors: 3.00 – 3.499 grade point average, based on current semester grades

Academic Letter

Students who earn placement on the Academic Distinction or the High Honor Roll for two semesters, accumulated any time during their Medford Area Senior High career, will receive an academic letter award. A letter “M” will be awarded for the first two semesters of achievement and subsequent two semester blocks of achievement will be recognized by bars to be pinned on the letter.

National Honor Society (NHS) selection recognizes those students that have met staff criteria of scholarship, leadership, service and character. NHS status is recognized in the spring of each year.

Analysis

Scholarships

The Medford Area Public School District, in comparing itself to other school districts in Wisconsin of comparable size, found that involvement and practices in promoting and awarding of scholarships to graduating seniors is very similar to those of other school districts. The scholarship committees judged the individual applications on their relative merits of quality, meeting of criteria and required references. The management and promotion of these scholarships are subject to the district’s nondiscrimination policy, as required by Wisconsin Statutes §118.13 and federal law.

Athletics

All coaches of Medford Area Senior High athletic teams uniformly notify athletes at the beginning of their respective seasons as to what are the conditions and criteria for receiving a letter at the end of the season. Honoring of athletic teams occurs during seasonable evening banquets where letters, participation awards and special recognitions are presented to the athletes in the presence of parents and community.

Academics

Information about academic letters, National Honor Society, Honor Roll and other academic award opportunities are accessible to all parents and students via the student handbook that is distributed at the beginning of each school year. Application materials, eligibility criteria and award information are free of bias, discrimination or stereotyping.

Opportunity for Participation

The school board assures that, as it conducted the evaluation, the district provided an opportunity for participation by pupils, teachers, administrators, parents, and residents of the school district. This was accomplished for three weeks in November 2018. It was posted to our website and our Facebook pages, reaching out to all community members, including parents and staff, encouraging them to share their opinions of this evaluation with our Director of Student Services / Special Education.