Stewardship:

expands the notion of leadership to include actions that arise from the caring for our collective home and restoring the balance and integrity of our natural and cultural communities. Stewardship is about having shared power among others rather than dominance over others. Stewards of youth equity see their accountability in the quality of their own educational experience and civic participation as well as in the academic success of others.

youthequitystewardship.com

(206) 909-7917
Youth Equity Stewardship Series

Presenters: Benjie Howard & Wade Colwell-Sandoval

Format: Interactive Student Workshops, “Listen Up” Community Presentation, Strategy Planning

Description:

The Youth Equity Stewardship Series is up to five gatherings designed to prepare middle and high school youth along with adult advocates from across a district to be powerful change agents in building inclusive, inspired school climates. The content combines live musical performance, structured dialogue, creative expression activities, and experiential learning. The arts-based curriculum is designed to build deeper relationships and connections across the spectrum of identities including (but not limited to) culture, race, gender identity, ability, age, belief, economics, learning preferences and academic history. All participants engage with the YES! workbook for processing their ideas and insights as they move through phases of the Youth Equity Stewardship Series curriculum. The series concludes with a culminating “Listen Up” community presentation of youth voices, and is followed by a strategic planning session with teachers to transfer the learning from the series into existing school improvement efforts.

“Listen Up” Community Engagement

After completion of the sessions, YES! participants join Wade and Benjie in a culminating performance on-stage to share their experiences, their stories and their creative expression with peers, teachers, administrators, parents and community members. Listen Up is a multi-media collaboration combining youth voice, adult testimony, spoken word, movement, visual art gallery, video, and the original hip hop & folk music used in the five sessions from Wade & Benjie’s album Borderless. The experience is an opportunity for the broader community to witness and learn from the participants, and for the participants to share their passion and their plans for taking real action in their school community. Listen Up also serves as a starting point for other teachers and administrators to join as advocates with the powerful youth equity stewards in multi-generational collaboration for the purpose of supporting positive change in their schools.

YES! Phases

1. Personal Culture / Personal Journey
2. Social Dominance to Social Justice
3. Creative Expression / Creative Resistance
4. Community Awareness/ Community Action
5. Stewardship in Motion/ “Listen Up” Community Engagement

Intended Outcomes

Shift in the tone and depth of youth and adult conversations
- New informed cross-cultural relationships
- Greater cultural awareness and empathy through stories
- An empowered sense of leadership and positive influence

Improvement in the climate of inclusion for students
- Students gain skills for active stewardship of inclusive climate
- More positive student-adult relationships
- Students build soulful, inspired, brave, dialogue spaces

Broad implementation of Equity Stewardship
- Students present and lead professional development session
- Students lead dialogue and activities with peers and younger students
- Equity Stewardship as part of school culture

Youth contribution to larger equity work
- Students gain a critical lens for recognizing and eliminating educational disparities
- Youth teams partner with adult Equity teams at building level
- Youth perspective informs shifts in educational practice

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YES! Core Concepts

• Stewardship: (etymology “house” & “caring”) Stewardship expands the notion of leadership to include actions that arise from the caring for our collective home and restoring the balance and integrity of our natural and cultural communities. Stewardship is about having shared power among others rather than dominance over others. Stewards of youth equity see their accountability in both the quality of their own educational experience as well as the academic success of others.

• Soulful Space: Most critical to the YES! process is creating a shared learning environment that is soulful, inspired, brave, and inclusive - one in which young people feel empowered, cared for, and encouraged to tell their stories and grow as individuals and as a collective. The comprehensive integration of creative modalities such as music, visual art and movement, the formation of community agreements and a commitment to a collaborative spirit all facilitate the journey to ensuring deepened relationships across the spectrum of human differences.

• Creative Expression / Creative Resistance: Social change rooted in the nuanced needs of diverse communities requires us to simultaneously engage on the head and heart level. Creative expression opens both the cognitive and emotional pathways that allow participants to engage their peers and others in the realm of ideas and feelings, bringing a soulfulness and much-needed energy to school improvement efforts. Creative Resistance is both a perspective and a set of tools for people to use when witnessing or experiencing the impact of either relational or systemic oppression.

• Inclusion, Equity, and Excellence: The work of truly transforming schools into inspired centers of learning for all will require the collaboration of students and educators. Youth perspective and student voices are central to the task of making sure our educational spaces are places where young people feel welcomed, seen, respected, understood, and cared for. The inter-generational partnership is essential to the work of reducing and eliminating educational disparities based on race, economics and other dimensions of difference. Deeply equitable and inclusive collaboration is vital to the work of an expectation of excellence. This value reaches well-beyond test scores toward life preparation, reflective citizenship, the preservation of identity, language and culture, and ensuring that substance, depth, and critical thinking are a part of the educational experience.

• Diversity: Diversity is a critical dimension of the YES! process expanding the notion of the term across multiple dimensions of difference that exist within individuals and between groups. Within the context of our society, diversity is often centered around race at the expense of other aspects of identity. Our framing of diversity includes (but is not limited to) gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, belief system, family structure, ethnicity, language and ability. Our humanity is a complex combination of our many diversities and, as in an ecosystem, our commitment to diversity is vital to a community’s health.

• Restorative Practice: Restorative practice is an indigenous-based commitment to community balance that is expanding into a world-wide social movement of repairing harm from conflict. This sensibility of “bringing community back to health” is ensuring human rights through compassionate inclusion and cultural empowerment. Restorative practices embrace the idea of our profound inter-connectedness and taking action to transform and heal our local & global human condition.
IN MY ONE BEAT...

I FEEL ...
I SEE ...
I UNDERSTAND ...
I BELIEVE ...
I AM ALIVE WITH ...
I STAND FOR ...
I STAND WITH ...
I HOPE ...
I KNOW ...
I HEAR ...
I AM FROM ...