

Social Justice Student Exposition

Friday, May 18, 2007

Students, teachers, community members, and university faculty from diverse backgrounds and institutions are beginning to work side by side to address two fundamental voids facing social justice educational endeavors in Chicago: the lack of meaningful curricular development and sharing by teachers on a local level and the lack of organized student presentation and action opportunities. The First Annual Social Justice Student Exposition will begin filling these interconnected voids by establishing opportunities for student-centered social justice learning, presenting, and action.

Plans and Components of the Annual Social Justice Student Exposition

Students from public, private, charter, and faith based schools will participate in this annual full-day event to demonstrate classroom learning of authentic social justice projects and cultural expressions. Students will present their knowledge, skills, perspectives, experiments, actions, and expressions through any of the aspects below – encompassing interdisciplinary demonstration, presentation, and action techniques.

- 1) **SJ Exhibitions of Learning:** utilizing any number of display methods (e.g., three section board, model, photo gallery, video, power point, written reports and materials, painted canvass, interactive activity, dramatic skit, experimentation), students will present what they've learned, concluded, and/or acted upon. A display area can include up to three tables, dividers, and access to certain technical equipment and outlets. *Awards and scholarships* will be presented to outstanding participants in recognition of their social justice contributions.
- 2) **SJ Peer Led Workshops:** some students or classrooms may chose to conduct a workshop with and for other students. The workshop will cover a social justice topic within the context of one or more disciplines, engage students in analytic thinking, challenge them to solve real world problems, and foster *pathways to action*.
- 3) **Democratic Participation & Curriculum Choice:** in democratic assembly style, students will brainstorm and build initial consensus on essential learning questions, skills, topics, themes, problems, lessons, books, and/or activities they'd like to see built into the curriculum for the coming year. Teachers will then publicly *commit* to integrating relevant student choices into next year's classes and follow up with similar student-centered discussions throughout the next cycle.
- 4) **SJ Performing Arts Celebration:** some students may be interested in performing during a city-wide talent show of "edutainment" hosted by local performing artists. Youth from across the city can express their artistic talents and social justice ideas to close out the event
- 5) **Printed Student Compilation of SJ Writings:** by *April 1st*, students may submit final drafts of written learning and expression (e.g., essays, poems, short stories, songs, scripts, research papers, letters, or any other written style). Individual writings will be made available on the day of the event. A *final copy* will be made available shortly after for those who order in advance (similar to a school yearbook). Any classroom that wants to participate in the reading and selection process will be able to vote on the writings they think should be printed. This book will also include student coverage of the annual event, including photos of displays and presentations, as well as results of teacher surveys, the students' curriculum vote tally, and student surveys on interest, participation, effectiveness, and suggestions for the following year. This book will become a valuable tool not only for documentation, but for curricular integration into classroom. It will also contain relevant readings on social justice from diverse sources.
- 6) **Video Production:** students will have the exciting opportunity to creatively document their own work through a series of video training and production projects coordinated by Gabriel Cortez, Ph.D. candidate in Education Policy Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Gabriel is a successful producer of mini-documentaries on important topics such as immigration and education. He will: **1)** facilitate production of a 5 to 10 minute May exposition *promotional video* for classroom use by February; **2)** assist students at participating schools in establishing video coverage of their own school's progress; and **3)** assist students in producing a culminating video, including coverage of the groundbreaking May exposition.

Guided by these *six aspects*, the process and event itself will become an incubator for students to take leadership on real-life problems while engaging in higher-order academic skills. They will teach *and* learn from each other, build relations, and affect social change.

Steering Committee meets every 2 weeks. For more information and to get involved, please contact Anton Miglietta at antonmiglietta@sbcglobal.net, Sonia Oliva at solival@uic.edu, or the Collaborative for Equity & Justice in Education at ceje@uic.edu or 312.413.2640.