



# Minnesota State High School League Summary Report

March 10, 2023



PAULA FORBES  
Conversation Catalyst



# Together We Make A Difference Roadmap

## Together we make a Difference

(March 2023)

The recommendations from the conference were forwarded to MSHSL to develop a new path forward and be used to change the way we treat each other and engage in sports and activities.

**We will make a difference.**

## The Invitation

During December and January several zoom conferences were held for students, athletic directors, district leaders, coaches and other interested parties to learn about the upcoming student conference and how they could participate. We also created a website for everyone to learn more, sign up and receive important information prior to the big event.

**See [Thestudentconferencemn.com](http://Thestudentconferencemn.com)**

## 5 Regional World Cafés to Gather Voice

(September and October 2022)

Seven regional World Cafe conversations hosted by student champions to engage and gather voice about respect, racism, and anti-bias in athletics/activities.

## Partnership/Collaboration

(February/March 2022)

The MSHSL initiated a statewide call to action to address racial harm and disrespect in athletics/activities.

## The Statewide Student Conference

Student conference was held on January 13, 2023 at Park Center High School in Osseo. Over 800 students came together to analyze and provide recommended action steps to the nine themes developed during the synthesis workshop.

## Synthesis Workshop

(October 27, 2022)

Students, district representatives, superintendents, MSHL, and coaches gathered to synthesis and connect themes from the World Cafés. Nine themes were discovered.

## Student Trainings

(July & August 2022)

Students were recruited and trained to host 7 student-led conversations from every region in the state to discuss the issues, needs and action required to address respect, racism and anti-bias in athletics/activities.

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## OUR WHY

In February, 2022 following a series of racist events at athletic events throughout the state, the Minnesota State High School League and nine other associations issued a press release stating the following:

Recently students, schools and communities have experienced racist events that tell us we as school leaders have more work to do. Mistreatment of anyone on any basis is not only intolerable, it is something we, as educational leaders, unequivocally condemn. Racial, religious, or sexual harassment is simply unacceptable in our schools. The goal of safe, supportive school environments is of paramount importance. It is essential that every effort be made, and action is taken to ensure that all students have a safe environment in which to learn and participate in activities. In addition, victims of racist words or actions need support. Together, we commit to making every effort to ensure that students have a safe environment in which to learn and participate in activities. To that end, the education organizations listed below will launch an initiative to improve behavior at high school events as well as schools in general. With the assistance of professional partners, this initiative will include:

- Organize student groups to develop a model code of conduct for all schools. Once developed, this code will be distributed to school boards, administrators, coaches, parents, and students statewide. The code will cover all aspects of participation in activities as well as at school. It will include activities, athletes, spectators, staff, students, and parents.
- Convene a student conference, through the MSHSL, MASSP and MNIAA, involving student leaders involved in athletics, fine arts and other activities to raise awareness about student conduct, bullying, gender, race and other issues and assist in the development of tools for all schools.
- Identify and provide resources to assist schools and administrators in planning, preparing and implementing best practices to address and eliminate these harmful behaviors and support of students and others who have been impacted.





# CALL-TO-ACTION

The school leader associations, led by The Minnesota State High School League contacted Forbes Solutions PLLC., and Youth Lens 360 to assist them in creating the opportunity to fulfill their call to action and lead the effort to convene student voice and host a student conference. Starting in August 2022, we travelled throughout the state and invited students who are athletes or who participate in school activities to create a student-created, student-led conversation on respect, racism and anti-bias in athletics and school activities. We hosted seven in-person World Café style conversations with hundreds of students from six different regions in the state. The information gathered from each World Café was brought to a syntheses workshop where nine themes were discovered from the thousands of student voices during the World Cafés. The nine themes were brought to the January 13, 2023, student conference and students were able to further analyze the themes and create recommendations and actions steps to address each theme. Any student who participates in athletics, fine arts and other activities and wanted to host a conversation to address student conduct, bullying, gender, race and other issues that impacts the full participation of any student was invited.

We looked for student leaders who honor other students for who they are and the gifts they bring to the world. They are champions of respect, diversity and leaders that see the need to work to make a positive impact in their school and activities.



## Region/Area visits:

- Detroit Lakes-September 14th
- Grand Rapids-September 15th
- Rochester-September 20th
- St. Louis Park-September 21st
- St. Cloud-September 27th
- North St. Paul-September 28th
- Redwood Falls-October 3rd

# WORLD CAFÉ

## CONVERSATION MODEL

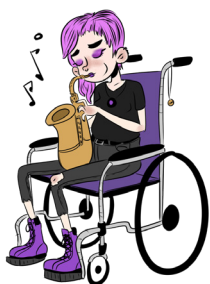
The World Café refers to both a vision and a method of dialogue. World Café Conversations are an intentional way to create a living network of conversation around questions that matter. A Café Conversation is a creative process for leading collaborative dialogue, sharing knowledge and creating possibilities for action in groups of all sizes. At times, the challenges of life require us to find new ways to access the wisdom and intelligence inherent in groups both small and large. We use this process to invite people to dialogue with us. Café Conversations gather collective insight that evolves from honoring unique contributions, connecting ideas; listening into the middle; noticing deeper themes and questions<sup>1</sup>.

### THE SEVEN DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF WORLD CAFÉ



#### Set The Context:

Clarify the purpose and broad parameters within which the dialogue will unfold. Be clear about your purpose in hosting the conversation.



#### Create Hospitable Space:

Ensure the welcoming environment and psychological safety that nurtures personal comfort and mutual respect. Honor our long traditions of human hospitality by offering food and refreshments. Hospitable space also means “safe” space—where everyone feels free to offer their best thinking.



#### Explore Questions That Matter:

Focus collective attention on powerful questions that attract collaborative engagement. Knowledge emerges in response to compelling questions. Powerful questions “travel well” help attract collective energy, insight, and action as they move throughout the system.

<sup>1</sup>See [artofhosting.org](http://artofhosting.org) for more information on the World Café process.



### Encourage Everyone's Contribution:

Enliven the relationship between the “me” and the “we” by inviting full participation and mutual giving. People engage deeply when they feel they are contributing their thinking to questions that are important to them. Encourage all participants to contribute to the conversation.



### Cross-pollinate And Connect Diverse Perspectives:

Enable people to visit different tables and hear different perspectives. They act as pollinators and begin to create a sense of the whole by hearing the “buzz’ from the room. Use the paper and markers to create a “shared visual space” through drawing the emerging ideas.



### Listen Together For Patterns, Insights, And Deeper Questions:

Focus shared attention in ways that nurture coherence of thought without losing individual contributions. The quality of our listening is the most important factor determining the success of a café.



### Harvest And Share Collective Discoveries:

Make collective knowledge and insight visible and actionable. This process often leads to surprising outcomes that no one could have predicted.

# THREE POWERFUL QUESTIONS WERE ASKED OF OUR STUDENTS

## QUESTION ONE

How might you as a student create and support a safe environment so that all students feel welcome and can participate in school athletics and activities?

## QUESTION TWO

How might we build camaraderie at sports, activities and school events?

## QUESTION THREE

How can we as students ensure that our fellow peers follow the rules and code of conduct at sporting events and activities even when we are not in a position of power?





**Conversation Agreements allow for diverse perspectives to be honored and heard. The agreements that we used throughout the process were:**



Listen to understand

Contribute your thinking

Speak your truth and accept that other opinions are okay

Be aware of your impact on the group

If you find yourself in judgment, turn to wonder

Listen with respect

No fixing, no advising

No shaming

# OCTOBER

## SYNTHESIS WORKSHOP

Following the regional World Café conversations with over 1500 students, we convened a group consisting of students, principals, superintendents, athletic directors, coaches and association representatives to look at the information that was gathered from the students and synthesize their voice into themes. We developed nine themes to move forward to the student conference:

### The Nine Themes That Emerged:

1. All students will feel safe, welcome, included to participate in sports
2. We will identify opportunities for mentorship, connection, relationship building and team building for both students and adults.
3. We will create access and opportunity for anyone that wants to participate in sports and activities.
4. Coaches, parents and athletes alike will lead by positive example.
5. Students will respect one another and provide positive reinforcement during all athletic events and activities.
6. Clear expectations will be set for all that attend and participate in sports.
7. Students will be responsible digital citizens and extend their positivity to social media.
8. Accountability for behavior that does not support a safe, welcome and inclusive environment.
9. Leadership opportunities for students.

# STATEWIDE STUDENT CONFERENCE

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On January 13, 2023, any student who was interested in the work that was occurring, was invited to participate at the statewide student conference at Park Center High School in Osseo MN. This is where each student had an opportunity to discuss with each other their thoughts on the work completed during the World Cafés and offer their ideas on action steps and additional insight. For this conference we used a G-WAVE process to analyze the data. We had an amazing day.

# AGENDA

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**Opening the Conference -**  
Superintendent Cory McIntyre

**Opening Pep Rally -**  
Khalique Rogers

**Keynote Speaker -**  
P.J. Hill - Financial Advisor and  
Real Estate Developer

**Student Speaker -**  
Radio Abdi - Former student and  
Youth Lens 360 Producer

**Guest Performer -**  
Zeakey on the Beat

**DJ -**  
Mickey Breeze

We also had two 360booths. Students were encouraged to meet other students from another school, take a picture together and post it on Instagram. We also had student performances throughout the day in the auditorium, lunch, snacks and dialogue around the themes. It was amazing!



# THE G-WAVE PROCESS



1. **WHY** is this an important goal? Will it help to stop racist behavior? Or create more opportunities? Or stop harassment? Or help everyone who participates in athletics and activities feel like they belong and are welcome? Will it improve our school culture? List as many Why's as possible?
2. What specific **ACTIONS** do we need to take to make this happen? Be detailed. What should we do first, second, third. Etc.
3. What is our **VISION**? Our work if successful, will respond to the WHY and move us forward with realistic ACTIONS. What will it look and feel like when we are successful?
4. Who will we **ENGAGE**? In order to complete this goal, who we will need to engage or get support from? Who must be at the table and help us to realize our VISION?

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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After the student conference, over 250 G-Wave sheets were reviewed and three overarching recommendations were formulated from all of the information that came forward.

## Recommendation One

Every student who participates in or attends a school sporting event and/or school activity will feel safe, welcome, and included.

- a. Coaches, parents and students who attend events will model positivity and lead by example.
- b. Students will be responsible digital citizens and all expectations of positive behavior will extend to social media and leave a positive footprint.

## Actions and Opportunities

1. Develop a universal code of conduct that will be consistently applied throughout the state holding every student accountable for behavior that does not support a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment.
  - The code of conduct shall be posted in every gym and an announcement should be made at the beginning of every game.
  - This expectation shall be extended to every coach, AD, parent, and any spectator to model positive behavior, follow the code of conduct and hold anyone who violates it immediately accountable.
  - Code of conduct should include a way for bad behavior to be reported immediately and anonymously.
  - Code of conduct should include a process for bad behavior to be addressed immediately.
  - The Code of conduct should include restorative practices.
  - Every student, coach, AD will receive training at the beginning of every year on the code of conduct and expectations for positive behavior at every sporting event and school activity.
2. Professional development and learning opportunities should be developed for everyone involved with sports and school activities.
  - Opportunities for anti-racism, equity, bias and harassment training will be developed and made available for everyone involved in sports or activities throughout the state.
  - Training should be mandated for all AD's, coaches, and athletes.
  - Provide opportunities for parents, and spectators to receive anti-racism, anti-bias, and harassment training. (Maybe in partnership with community education).
3. Relationship and team building opportunities should be developed and provided for every student involved in sports and activities.
4. Hire diverse and effective coaches, AD's and referees.
5. Provide opportunities for students to create connections across the state when we are not in competition so that we can build positive relationships.
  - Student voice opportunities.
  - Opportunities for team bonding with other teams.

## Recommendation Two

Identify leadership opportunities for students to model positive behavior.

### Actions and Opportunities

1. Create opportunities for more student voice and open dialogue.
2. Develop ways for students to be more inclusive.
3. Encourage student participation at clubs and sport events.
4. Create more experiential opportunities for students to connect with each other from across the state.
5. Improve ways to increase everyone's opportunity to lead and contribute.
6. Engage with isolated individuals to help them feel a part of the team.
7. Provide chances for all students to step into leadership opportunities.
8. Celebrate and showcase examples of positive behavior.

## Recommendation Three

MSHSL will create and improve opportunities for any student regardless of income, race or gender identity to be included and have access to athletic and school activities.

### Actions and Opportunities

1. Communicate and encourage everyone, not just those who know or have been participating in sports and activities to join or understand how they can join athletics and activities free of charge.
2. Recruit and encourage diverse students.
3. Create ways for sports and activities to be accessible for low-income and non-traditional students.
  - Equipment and transportation cost is free!
4. Help with language barriers.
5. Encourage rather than intimidate.
6. Recruit students with disabilities to participate in adaptive and competitive sports.



## CONFERENCE HOSTS

### **Hosting School - Osseo Public Schools -**

Superintendent Cory McIntyre

### **Khalique Rogers -**

Master of Ceremony

### **Paula Forbes - Conference Facilitation -**

Forbes Solutions PLLC.

### **Robin Francis - Conference Facilitation -**

Forbes Solutions PLLC.

### **Jessica Turner - Event Planner -**

Forbes Solutions PLLC.

### **Dario Otero - Video Production and Social Media -**

Youth Lens 360

### **Lisa Quednow -**

Minnesota State High School League

### **Charlie Campbell -**

Minnesota State High School League

## CONFERENCE GUESTS

### **Keynote Speaker -**

P.J. Hill - Financial Advisor and Real Estate Developer

### **Rabio Abdi -**

Former student and Youth Lens 360 Producer

### **Guest Performer -**

Zeakey on the Beat

### **DJ -**

Mickey Breeze

# CONTRIBUTORS

## Associations Supporting the Work

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Minneapolis Foundation

Minnesota State High School League

Minnesota School Boards Association

Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals

Minnesota Interscholastic Administrators Association

Association of Metropolitan School Districts

Minnesota Association of School Administrators

Voice for Greater Education

Minnesota Elementary Principals Association

Schools for Equity in Education

State High School Coaches Association

GHR Foundation

Forbes Solutions PLLC.

Youth Lens 360

# *Special Thanks*

## **A BIG Thank You to Park Center High School and Osseo Area Public Schools**

We would like to thank Superintendent Cory McIntyre for his support and contribution to the Student Conference and this initiative. Without Superintendent McIntyre's support, this conference would not have happened. A super big thank you to Principal Heather Miller-Cink and her staff. There is no way the conference would have been successful without their support, flexibility, and willingness to help us from the crack of dawn; setting up tables and chairs, bleachers, stages etc. only to have to break everything down in time for afternoon and evening activities. Your commitment to students is seen by your actions and support and we just can't begin to thank you enough. You made the experience for students a great experience and we appreciate you.

Last but not least volunteers make things happen. We appreciate you and your commitment to students and willingness to help support this initiative and the students who came to attend the conference. You didn't have to help but you did. That's the definition of Allyship. You are simply amazing.

We recognize and appreciate all of the contributors who decided to take action to address racism, bias and harassment in athletics and school activities. They stepped forward and supported this effort vigorously. We are confident that the associations will take action on the recommendations. We appreciate their commitment and understanding that student voice is at the heart of this work. Together we make a difference!

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### **Forbes Solutions PLLC.**

Paula Forbes  
Robin Francis  
Jessica Turner

### **Youth Lens 360**

Dario Otero  
Norman Westberry III