Co-Curricular Write Up #2:

Last week I attended the Cultural Diversity Day at RMHS and was happily surprised to see the variety of student’s cultural backgrounds. As part of the festival students prepared booths with information about what makes their culture unique and shared their pride for their heritage and traditions.
 The first students I approached were excited to share their Mexican culture with a short slide show that included holidays, traditions, and basic information about the country. I asked Dionara if she felt RMHS values the diversity of their students, and she said that Rocky did their best to create a community that is inclusive of all cultures. We also discussed the issue of cultural appropriation and their feelings on how culture can be appreciated by others while still being respectful of the sanctity of certain traditions or practices. I was surprised by how maturely these students discussed touchy issues about ethnicity and appropriation. There was a large range of countries represented at the festival including El Salvador, Taiwan, and Costa Rica.

The cultural diversity fair also included some of Rocky’s clubs such as Global Leaders, Girl Rising, and the Gender Sexuality Alliance. I thought it was telling that students understood that cultural diversity isn’t just about where you come from, but what makes us all unique. The GSA club had a game which encouraged raising awareness about differences in sexual or gender orientation in a way that attempted to break down the stigma surrounding gender and sexual assignment. I thought this was a creative way to open a conversation about things that might usually make people uncomfortable. I also caught up with the young women from Girl Rising, the club I attended at the beginning of the semester, to see how their efforts had been paying off. They told me that they had taken my advice to sell products at RMHS to raise money for the young women they support overseas! I was so inspired by the Girl Rising club when I first attended their meeting and I was happy they took my advice to improve their efforts!

Activities like the Cultural Diversity Day are what makes RMHS so unique. I told one of the groups that I never experienced something like this at my high school. Encouraging students to explore, express, and take pride in their cultural backgrounds helps to build a community where students feel included and respected for their differences. As I’ve observed RMHS this semester, I have seen how important inclusion is to the students and staff at the school. It seems to me that every student at Rocky can feel like they belong which is something many young people struggle with. As a perspective educator I am seeing that this is the type of school I would like to teach at one day.