

BARRINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Conducted virtually via Zoom

Diversity Equity and Inclusivity SubCommittee
Minutes
June 23, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Present: Gina Bae, Paula Dillon, Diana Siliezar, Venus Tien, Erika Sevetson, Kelly Kaon, Ece Uzun, Victoria Criado, Katie Spencer, and Doug Lane

Absent: Stacey Siravo-Basin, Nicole Varone, Tracey McGee

Public Attendees: Maura McCrann, Alexis Kutenplon

A. Introduction

1. Review of Norms
2. Administrative
 - Two sets of minutes will be sent out for approval prior to the next meeting

B. Old Business – Recap of Activities

1. Policy Group
 - The working group provided leadership groups and administrators with policies and asked for feedback. Feedback has been received, though there wasn't a large amount.
 - Moving forward, the DEI subcommittee should review how practices are implemented. For example, there is a diversity statement on job descriptions but no way to understand if a pool of diverse candidates is being developed.
 - In the future, we will review as a full committee and then make recommendations to the policy committee.
 - A meeting occurred with Paula, Theresa Moore, and representatives from the Ottawa School District to understand their successful DEI practices.
 - Most of the policies examined to date were focused on harassment. Moving forward, there is a desire to take a deeper look at systemic aspects / barriers.
2. Communications Plan
 - The group met at the beginning of February, but the COVID-19 lockdown delayed progress.
 - There have been some inquiries from the community asking what is being done to address issues of racism in the education system as part of the broader community focus on these issues in recent months.
 - The superintendent's office sent a letter to the community on the topic, which Paula posted on the DEI website.

- Paula posed the question of how we can use that page to provide more regular updates moving forward.

3. Recruiting Educators of Color

- Katie provided an update on initial topics and next steps from the February meeting.
 - One topic discussed was moving the diversity statement closer to the top of job descriptions to demonstrate prioritization.
 - They also discussed how to make schools safe spaces for educators of color.
- Diana suggested trying to find ways to have conversations between people of color and people who don't have the same background. For example, we can try to provide examples or training for how to have these conversations through a positive and/or realistic lens to make them productive versus taking steps backwards.
- Paula has a plan with Theresa Moore to conduct training in August and will be working with the schools on how to engage in these conversations.
- The group discussed bringing Theresa in to meet with the group as we plan for the upcoming school year.
- Gina mentioned that she has been attending meetings at RIDE focused on educators of color. Topics covered have included barriers to recruiting and retaining educators of color.
- One noteworthy idea that was discussed: In Newton, MA and Brookline, MA, educators who teach in district can enroll their students in the district without cost.
- Paula suggested partnering with RIDE on diverse student teacher recruitment, as we do not receive many placements. Many are being steered to urban school districts. The district does now have a partnership with Roger Williams focused on special education.
- Victoria raised the question of whether initiatives are being considered to subsidize housing for student teachers. Paula noted that in the dialogue with Roger Williams, there has been some discussion about course reimbursement in return for a commitment with the district.
- We are expecting four student teachers for the high school, which is higher than in the past.

C. New Business

1. Membership for the New School Year

- The subcommittee will reconvene in the fall.
- There have been some inquiries from the community expressing interest in the committee.
- The group agreed that maintaining the diversity of the committee should be a priority and approached with intention.
- The goal is to keep subcommittees to 17 people or less.
- We need to recruit new student representatives to fill upcoming vacancies.
- There is also an interest in recruiting more staff.
- Victoria raised the topic of term limits. Paula noted that there may be value in this based on experience with longer standing committees, but it may be less of an issue for now

with DEI since there is room for new members and the committee is still just gaining momentum.

- Katie McBride will reach out to existing members in the fall to determine interest in continuing.
- Outreach for new members will also begin in the fall.

2. Possible Focus Areas for Next Year

- Gina noted that it may be useful to focus on how incidents are handled, professional development, etc.
- Paula added that we haven't delved deep enough into impact vs. intent and suggested additional work with Theresa around plans and professional learning.
- Erica mentioned that there is broad interest from the community in greater engagement on DEI issues. The group discussed making this part of the charter of the communications team and exploring ideas such as partnering with the Barrington Public Library.
- Venus mentioned that most students who are hurt by a comment in the classroom are unlikely to report it. She expressed a desire for more training for educators to know the right moment to step in with more nuanced comments in the moment to diffuse situations. She shared some personal experiences as examples.
- Kelly noted that it is also important to educate the staff like crossing guards and shared a personal example.
- Paula mentioned that she is working with Theresa on a major plan that may help with these types of interactions.
- Gina suggested offering some type of training / resources for parents with Theresa's help as well, possibly in conjunction with PTOs.
- Paula will share Ottawa plan and other supporting materials with the committee. (It's publicly available.)

E. Public Comment - no comments

Approved 12.15.2020