BARRINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Barrington Public School Administration Building

School Committee Room

283 County Road, Barrington, RI

Diversity Equity and Inclusivity SubCommittee

Minutes

February 26, 2019

6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Present: Gina Bae, Erika Sevetson, Paula Dillon, Venus Tian, Kelly Kaon, Ece Uzun, Victoria Criado, Doug Lane, Diana Siliezar, Stacey Siravo-Basin

Absent: Tracey McGee, Nicole Varone, Cyara Cooper

Community Attendees: Ron Pitt

1. Pledge of Allegiance - Led by Gina

1. Old Business
   1. Meeting Minutes, Norms, and Focus Areas
      1. Gina reviewed the minutes from the 1.15.19 meeting, and the group approved.
      2. Doug agreed to record the meeting minutes moving forward.
      3. Gina reviewed the subcommittee’s previously agreed norms and focus areas.
   2. Culturally Responsive Curriculum (CRC) Updates
      1. Alison Grieco from Barrington High School submitted a written update on behalf of the Culturally Responsive Curriculum (CRC) team that she and Theresa Moore of T-Time Productions introduced to the subcommittee at the 1.15.19 meeting.
      2. Highlights:
         1. The team has met twice with an initial focus on increasing awareness of their work, discussing language used in the classroom, and exploring bias in textbooks and other information sources.
         2. They will meet next on 3.5.19 to focus on a mission statement and initial steps to pair teachers and students to focus on units of study.
         3. The Model Legislature group, of which three CRC participants are members, successfully debated for the passage of a bill “To Increase Underrepresented Voices in Education” during the State Model Legislature Day on 2.2.19.
      3. Stacey provided an update on efforts by the 11th and 12th grade English teachers at the high school to provide exposure to literature from more diverse cultures and bring diverse perspectives to the existing curriculum through the creation of essential questions and informational text that can be paired with core reading selections.
      4. Paula noted that Theresa Moore is now running workshops in the district with an initial focus at the elementary level. The group discussed linking this effort with the RULER social and emotional learning program to explore ways to emulate its successful “train the trainer” approach.
2. New Business
   1. Central Falls Model Policy on Racial and Ethnic Equity
      1. Community member Ron Pitt, a Barrington resident, educator, and member of the Central Falls School Board, joined the meeting to discuss a draft policy that he shared with the Barrington School Committee as a possible model to emulate.
      2. Ron described the policy as a framework to counteract pressures on students and ensure that they have equal opportunities to learn, develop, and succeed.
      3. The subcommittee engaged in an interactive discussion with Ron to learn more about the policy’s origins and level of community engagement.
      4. Action Step: The subcommittee agreed to read the current Central Falls draft more thoroughly in preparation for a follow-up discussion at the next meeting.
   2. Diversifying the Teaching Staff
      1. The subcommittee discussed current and possible future steps to bring more teachers from diverse backgrounds into the district.
      2. Paula described her existing teacher recruitment efforts, noting that the overall quantity and quality of candidates (independent of background) is a general challenge.
      3. The subcommittee brainstormed possible ideas for attracting teachers from diverse backgrounds to the district. Ideas raised included:
         1. Facebook ads for available job postings that are targeted based on demographics to reach possible candidates from diverse backgrounds.
         2. Establish a roster of guest speakers from diverse backgrounds that teachers can draw from to bring unique perspectives to curriculum topics.
         3. Explore a program to bring professionals from diverse backgrounds into teaching roles for set periods of time (e.g., 2 years).
         4. Explore opportunities for mutually beneficial teacher exchange partnerships with other districts.
         5. Engage students in teacher education programs earlier in their journey and influence programs to better guide students to levels and subject matter areas with the greatest needs and job availability.
         6. Proactively introduce Barrington High School students to teacher education career paths.
      4. Action Step: The subcommittee agreed to brainstorm additional ideas, revisit the topic at the next meeting, and identify any actionable next steps.
3. Action Step Recap
   1. Read the draft Central Falls Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy in preparation for further discussion at the next meeting.
   2. Brainstorm ideas for recruitment of teachers from diverse backgrounds for discussion at the next meeting.
4. Public Comment - None beyond the above referenced discussion with Ron Pitt.