

CAPE ELIZABETH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
Cape Elizabeth, Maine

Tuesday, June 23, 2020
SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP
ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE
6:30 p.m.

MEETING AGENDA

Click [here](#) for the link to the recorded video.

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I. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Cape Elizabeth Schools:

A. Presentations:

- Heather Altenburg – Welcome/Rationale for the Workshop

Ms. Altenburg welcomes participants, introduces the topic for the evening, and reads a statement that she wrote regarding racism and white privilege.

- Donna Wolfrom – Overview of Agenda/Meeting Goals

The goals of this meeting are to gain a better understanding of where the district is in our efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in Cape Elizabeth Schools. As teachers, we are taught to assess, and we need to assess where we are, make a plan, and move forward. We know that we have a lot to learn, and a lot of work to do as a district. Tonight, we will be hearing from several speakers, and I hope there will be opportunity for others to join the discussion. Town Council is very interested in forming a Committee with staff and School Board members to talk about moving forward.

- Cathy Stankard – Curriculum/Professional Development

Ms. Stankard's presentation starts around the nine-minute mark. She begins by borrowing a 5-step program on "How to be an Anti-Racist Educator" by Dena Simmons, and the discussion flows from there to incorporate these steps and how they are and might be further imbedded in our curriculum and professional development in our schools.

- Jason Manjourides & Bri Gallagher – Racial Equity Institute Training

Last year in November, they attended this training, the company running the training was based in Greensboro NC, and is an 18 month to 2-year program. It encompasses the thought of joining the conversation and immersing oneself in what's going on around us. Mr. Manjourides attended the phase 1 segment. He proceeds to talk about the experience around the 14:30 mark of the video. Bri Gallagher (PC School Counselor) joins the conversation around the 15:45 mark of the video to add points of her experience, she attended in January of this year. At this point many participants from the public spoke and commented.

- GSEA Leadership Academy Participants – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey

1. We are here representing seven teachers from all three schools who attended multi-district leadership training this year through the Greater Sebago Education Alliance. We are here today to share a little bit of our work and also to outline what we believe is essential work for us to move forward as an antiracist school district.
2. It was clear to us from our group's first meeting that the focus of our work should be inequity and bias in our schools.

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3. We are grateful to Superintendent Wolfrom and the school board for allocating funds that helped us begin this work.
4. As a result of our work together, we created a survey to assess implicit and explicit bias in school staff. However, the school closure due to COVID-19 prevented us from distributing that survey. Then, the March 13th killing of Breonna Taylor, the racist incident against Christian Cooper in Central Park on May 25th, and the killing of George Floyd the same day demonstrated to our group that the work we started does not match the urgency with which we feel Cape Elizabeth Schools must address racism.
5. On June 6th, our group sent a letter to district leadership outlining clear steps we believe must be taken to start our work to become an antiracist institution. Our letter was received with support from many teachers in the district who are ready to do this work. Additionally, Superintendent Wolfrom and Cathy Stankard took time to meet with us to discuss our perspective. We were also encouraged by School Board Chair Heather Altenburg's letter to the school community. We support the district taking the following actions:
 - a. Professional anti-racism training for all district faculty and staff in 2020
 - b. A dedicated district budget for anti-racism training
 - c. Time, resources, and training for teachers to examine their curricula through an anti-racist lens
 - d. Ongoing professional development in anti-racism
6. From our perspective as teachers in Cape Elizabeth, we acknowledge and believe:
 1. This work will be uncomfortable. As white educators, we must lift up and listen to the voices of our Black and Brown students and their families. There has been a clear message from the last 2 protests that the Cape Elizabeth School District must address issues of racism.
 2. For too long we have identified as a white school district and have failed to fully recognize students and families of color in our community. While it is true we are a majority white school district, we are fully responsible for antiracist work. The fact that there are fewer students of color in Cape Elizabeth than in other communities does not absolve us of doing the work of antiracism.
 3. The difficult work of deconstructing our curricula, learning about our own biases and prejudices and how they have impacted our students in the past is vital but cannot fall on the shoulders of individual teachers alone.
 4. Teachers must have the support of administration, school leaders, the school board and town. We need a district-wide financial commitment to this work and professional training and development.
 5. The district has a responsibility to clearly communicate with the community about the action steps it will take to address racism in our schools.
 6. There is potential in this moment. If we don't address this now, we seem ignorant of the fact that our community is demanding change.

We want to thank Superintendent Wolfrom and members of the School Board for this workshop. Both Joanna and I are committed to this work and plan to continue to fight for these necessary changes.

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- Heather Altenburg – Ideas for Moving Forward Discussion

Discussion was had about compiling and absorbing all of the ideas, comments and discussion that happened during the meeting. And continuing the discussion moving forward. Respect of time was mentioned. Other members of the Board agreed, Ms. Straw mentioned that she was appreciative of the frank feedback from one of the participants from the community, and that she would encourage that to be something moving forward. To encourage frank conversations so that growth can happen. Mr. Shir spoke both as a parent and as a SB member, that change takes time. Having different opinions is part of the diversity, but finding a common voice is a goal. Forums like this, becoming more often and consistent, is going to help with that goal.