

Board of Education
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Sub-Committee
March 11, 2022
10am
BOE Conference Room
3 Primrose Street Newtown, CT 06470
Minutes

In attendance:

Rebekah Harriman, Chair

Donald Ramsey, Member

Daniel Cruson, Member

Wesley Johnson, District Coordinator of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

2 members of the public

1. Call to Order - 10:05 am

2. Public Participation

Douglas Lord, Director of the Library. Library to host CRT workshops and perhaps other issues to educate on terminology in a non-partisan way.

3. New Business

a. Development/Review of Sub-Committee Charge -
Committee reviewed and revised charge

Motion: DEI Committee will adopt the following charge:

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee of the Newtown Board of Education will be charged with the following:

- **In partnership with the District's Coordinator of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Superintendent, the Subcommittee will develop, monitor, and report to Board of Education members and the Newtown community on deliverables and progress on outcomes related to the Board's DEI Resolution adopted on July 7, 2020.**
- **Upon request from administration, Board of Education members, or the community, the Subcommittee will review BOE operations using "the Four Pillars Affirming Diversity in Schools." These operations will include, but will not be limited to, policies, hiring, and curriculum.**
- **Support the work of the Coordinator of DEI, and develop an ongoing sustainability plan for efforts throughout the district.**

Charge of the committee passes unanimously

b. Review of BOE Resolution on Diversity and Equity

Mr. Ramsey asked whether the resolution can be amended. Ms. Harriman noted that there is also an accompanying policy codifying the resolution. Mr. Cruson discussed that the resolution was just the first step. Mr. Ramsey also suggested that the group review, "Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR) to review other alternatives to supplement the DEI Resolution and the efforts of Wesley Johnson.

Mr. Cruson noted that a Board level retreat for DEI training should be planned by the Subcommittee. All members agreed. Mr. Johnson said that part of the sustainability plan would be to implement a training model for every level of the district – board members, administrators, and all staff – a system wide approach.

c. Update from Staff

Mr. Johnson updated the Subcommittee on the survey about the Anonymous Alert App that will be going out to students. The survey will assess the impact and usage of the app, and results will be used to make adjustments to make it more user friendly and appropriate.

Mr. Johnson discussed the work that the PEAC DEI Working Group has been doing. They will be examining the results from the Anonymous Alert Survey, continuing to develop the Four Pillars Affirming Diversity in Schools, developing and supporting building level DEI teams, and working with the Assistant Superintendent to ensure that the School Climate Survey addresses DEI.

d. Meeting schedule

The Subcommittee decided it would meet quarterly, or as needed.

4. Public Participation - none

Meeting adjourned at 11:30am

Four Pillars of Affirming Racial Diversity in Public Schools: What They Mean and What Students and Families Expect

By Dr. George A. Coleman and Esther

Bobowich

Welcoming Schools

- School overtly reinforces to families and students that the school is their asset and the school enthusiastically welcomes their participation.
- Students and families are always greeted warmly and assured that the school values hearing from them.
- School develops a “student and family” perspective as part of its planning and problem-solving capacity.
- Intends that all contacts and engagements with students and families will be positive and well intentioned. Is prepared to explain the “educational interest” especially, when disagreement is evident, or discipline is required.
- Students’ daily attendance, engagement and, maximum access to learning and participation opportunities are the priority interests of the school.
- Exhibit and celebrate the widest possible examples of student participation, progress, and achievement.
- Develop capacity to monitor and improve student perceptions of the school and their participation.
- Engages families in “whole child” interests of the school and assists families in coordinating non-school assets to support student health, well-being, and success.
- Every student is valued, assets acknowledged, needs identified and, is consciously supported in being integrated into the school community

Safe Schools

- Ensures that every child’s experience from home to school and, from school to home is safe.
- Ensures that students experience the offerings and experiences of the school day without physical or psychological harm.
- School’s anti-bullying policy and consequences are explained, and copies provided to each student and family.
- School’s inclusion values are evident and, inclusion policies and violation consequences published and explained to all students and every family.
- Safety expectation and student responsibility are posted in an unavoidable manner throughout the school and in school facilities including, on technology-- and the use of technology-- in and out of school.
- All students participate in public health requirements and protocols associated with public school attendance and participation in school activities
- School premises are regularly monitored to minimize risk of injury and resources allocated to correct unsafe facilities, equipment and known hazards.
- Student insurance and coverage is coordinated with family as consideration for participation in school activities where physical harm is possible

Opportunity to Participate

- Students are supported in all curricular activities to maximize success. All students are encouraged to take high level course offerings, without regard for prior qualifying criteria.
- Students are assigned and expected to participate in a variety school activity. The school sponsors engagement activities sufficient to include most students across wide areas of student interest and developmental priorities.
- Extra-curricular activities expect and provide support for student participation at all levels.
- All students are given equal opportunity to participate, develop and offer leadership, without regard to years of prior participation, prior residence or experience, student enrollment date, or ability to provide personal financial support.
- School knows student needs and anticipates obstacles that may inhibit student participation and success. School coordinates family, school, and community assets to supply student comprehensive needs and overcome challenges that may affect current and future success.

Opportunity to Learn About Self and Others

- School encourages and supports curricula that include student's diverse membership groups' impact, point of view, contribution, and interest, as known and appropriate
- School encourages and supports Professional Develop that supports professional knowledge acquisition and content application.
- School values the contribution of a diverse staff and seeks opportunities to supplement its staff with diverse voices, content, and authentic representatives of the diverse body of students.
- School encourages pedagogy and content that affirms knowledge of world geography, language, culture, and interactions that shape world history, social development, and contextual knowledge of contemporary issues.
- Students are encouraged and supported in using their own experiences and those of their family as exemplars, as appropriate, within the learning context.
- Students expect to learn from the experiences and points of view of peers, as appropriate.
- School celebrates and make apparent student application of high standards when representing diverse content (application of critical thinking, content analysis and informed assessment of content and diverse perspectives.)