

## REIAC Meeting Debrief

February 25, 2020

Present: Cathy Sanchez, Melissa Y. Rock, Sophia Skiles, Jesse Avila Nativi, Pilar Duvivier, Jen Barry, Kristen Masson Diedhiou, Allison Lauchaire, Diana Armstead, Reeti Patel, Superintendent Bernard Josefsberg

*What worked:* Authentic with thoughts & feelings shared.

*Challenges:* Many REIAC members have lived through many incidents that have shaped our views w/ the administration in its dealing with race.

*Worth noting:* Many administrators with whom individuals/REIAC has had more contentious relationships with have since moved on and left the administration. We have many new administrators, and thus potential for building a new working relationships.

### **Suggestions:**

- Written ground rules to address cross-talk, among other challenges that arise when discussing difficult topics
- Guests should come to a particular part of the meeting after REIAC establishes the ground-rules.
- Video conference, not phone connections
- Would be useful to have pre-prepared questions
- Should not have situation where we are questioning community members/parents in front of administration that are involved.
- Question regarding Restorative Justice practices and follow up meetings with victim and offender w/o consultation with parents.
- Have a smaller group from REIAC do an “intake” (vs. investigation) with community members/parents/kids who have had issues w/in the district
- Could REIAC members be “advocates” that could go into meetings with parents w/in the district
- Diane A. mentioned a group that was organized years ago that held meetings where community members could come and tell their story
- Find ways to be constructive w/o attacking someone (especially w/ people who we know do care).

### **Question/Concerns (not a suggestion):**

- If we are not investigative, then who is?
- There is no guideline consequences for offenses that are non-violent, race-based offenses, such as the use of racial slurs (vs. designated consequences for bringing weapons to school, getting into fights, etc.). These race-based harms create invisible scars that kids (and their parents) carry with them for long periods of time if not properly addressed (ideally with a restorative justice practice/framework).
  - Cannot assure parents that kids who harm get a consequence that is fair and tailored to the situation.
  - The kids deserve an explanation.
  - The question of “what punishment” is a kid receiving for a harm is borne out of a skepticism that racial offences have any consequences at all.
- Is it possible for one or a small subset of REIAC members, to call the district to ask for a report out regarding whether or not there have been any incidents (each week)?
  - Recommend: weekly contact with the administration/district asking if there have been any DASA/other incidents w/in the schools? (obligated by law is through quarterly reports)
  - However, there is a strong feeling that REIAC is not accepted as a partner on these issues w/in the district (particularly at the school level)

### **Miscellaneous notes/comments:**

Need to crowdsource “ground rules” for future meetings especially involving parent/child incidents.

Hastings-on-Hudson website (home page, scroll down to links on the left) has a powerpoint “Race Matters” – has some interesting work that is comprehensive.

Pine Bush had to settle a multi-million \$ lawsuit around anti-Semitism. Thus, the District is well advised to address these issues head on.