

**New Paltz Central School District
Racial Equity Initiative Advisory Committee**

**Tuesday, January 8, 2019
District Offices
Lenape Elementary, Room 115**

MINUTES

Meeting commenced at 6:40pm

Present: Diana Armstead, Tricia Bowen, Cathy Sanchez Duvivier, Pilar Duvivier, Richard Heyl de Ortiz, Kristen Masson-Diedhiou,

Confirm of meeting time change

Confirmed that future meetings will be held at 6:30 instead of 6:15. Next meeting: 2/5/19.

Systemic Racism Definition

A draft “definition” of systemic racism developed within the school district was distributed. This was not distributed directly to the committee. Generally members felt that the definition was not acceptable.

Questions from committee members:

- Who developed this? Why was it developed?
- Was Natalie McGee not included? If not, why? Who facilitated?
- Did any of the authors attend Undoing Racism?
- Are any of the authors people of color?
- What is the Cultural Proficiency Cohort? Who is part of this? How were they picked?
- How will this definition be used?
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Point was made that time and effort should not be spent creating a new “definition.” Rather, it would seem to be better to use an established definition and contextualize it for New Paltz.

Comparison of Student Demographics to Teachers Demographics

Chart prepared by Tricia from publicly-available data. Illustrates disproportionately and the reality that the minority representation among teaching staff falls well short of the demographic breakdown of our student population.

Discussion Regarding Incident Reporting and Follow-Thru

A draft document entitled “Protocols for Responding to a Hateful Act, Act of Bias and/or Possible Hate Crime” was distributed to committee members in advance, along with comments, edits and questions from Sisters of Sojourner Truth’s. Discussion ensued. General feeling that

the draft is way too specific and seems to be written to respond only to one incident. Suggestion that the district look at best practices and other models that are evidence-based.

It was noted that there are several incident report forms used by the district. Seems that each school has their own form. None seem to have a check-off or other way of indicating that the incident is bias-related. In addition, forms do not contain much of the information on the NYSED Individual Incident Report Form.

Other Agenda Items

The following two items were on the agenda for the committee meeting but were not discussed: 1) Review of hiring process document and 2) Discussion of a recent presentation of the district's Racial Equity Action Plan by Superintendent Rice.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm

Next Meeting
Tuesday, February 5, 6:30pm

Accomplishments

We would like to thank the BOE and Superintendent Rice for adopting the following REIAC recommendations:

- Agreeing to pilot the use of an online anonymous incident reporting mechanism in the near future.
- Hiring for Racial Equity was added to the District's Action Plan for Racial Equity, as recommended in the Culturally Proficiency book.
- Adopting the use of an Interview Committee that consist of a diverse group of Staff, Students, and Parents for high level Administrative positions of Principal, and Assistant Principal.
- Advertising beyond OLAS to reach a diverse pool of applicants for open positions.

Outstanding Items and Recommendations

Document Action Plan Milestones

In an attempt to align the work of the committee with the work of the district, it would be helpful to see milestones for the Action Plan. Racial Equity Community Forums (Possibility for extracting milestones from the questions provided by parents).

Committee Membership

Reopening application to the REIAC. This means that the application process would be open to teachers and administrators. There are two spots for teachers and two for administrators. We cannot stress enough the importance of having teachers and admin staff at these discussions. We understand that with school and recent admin changes this can be rough, but it is worth it.

Climate Survey

Can the REIAC review the Climate Survey that was administered at the High School?

Hiring Protocols

We recommend that a BOE member sit on the Committee as an outside observer so that institutional power isn't favored over parents, students, and staff recommendations.

Bias Awareness Curriculum Project - We are aware that there was a "Summer 2018 Bias Awareness Curriculum Project", conducted by teachers in each school. We would like a chance to meet with this group to hear their findings and provide feedback from a parent/student perspective. How do we get in touch with them?

Invitation - REIAC would like to invite the new administrators in the district to come and meet our committee to help them better understand what we are doing and to be able to connect with new administration.

Incident Reporting Example

Graffiti incident reporting from beginning to end - REIAC has requested a full reporting of this incident that occurred at Lenape during the Spring of the 2017-2018 school year. We would like to know how this incident was handled from the time of the initial report, through communication to staff and families, to any consequences that were implemented. This could be a confidential report to REIAC for the purposes of understanding current protocols. REIAC plans on reviewing existing protocols and making recommendations for possible changes.