

Racial Equity Initiative Advisory Committee

Report Out to the Board: September 12, 2018

Good evening. Thank you for your service. The Racial Equity Initiative Advisory Committee is grateful to have this opportunity to help do this important work for all of our students.

Regarding Hiring

A lot of our discussion was, understandably around hiring. One of the charges of our committee is to make recommendations that will lead to the hiring of more diverse staff and hiring of individuals who are committed to issues of racial equity.

Recruitment

REIAC discussed strategies for recruitment that go beyond OLAS. We provided a list of links to local colleges that offer school administrative degrees, and a list of professional administrator diversity organizations, so that the district could reach out to those organizations in their recruitment efforts. These lists can be found in our minutes.

We suggest formatting the job description the way that BOCES formats their job descriptions, so that it is picked up via a Google Jobs search. This would cast a wider net and would be free advertising for the district.

We are requesting further clarification about the early stages of the hiring process. Some questions we have: Who screens the initial applicant responses? What criteria do they screen for? How do they narrow down from the initial OLAS selections?

Interview Process

Regarding the interview committee process, several issues of concern arose.

We recommend that:

1. Two spots on the interview committee be reserved for sitting REIAC members.
2. The interview process used to hire the Lenape principal (where teachers and parents had a chance to interview and deliberate candidates together) be followed in the future.
3. As is stands, only parents of students currently in the school are considered for participation on the interview committees for positions at that school. We recommend that the district allow parents of students who are exiting the school to be a part of the interview committee, as they have valuable insights bring to the process.

4. An invitation to be a part of the committee be sent to the building parents as a whole—not just through a specific organization, such as the PTA. REIAC volunteers to help select interview committee members from the pool of interested parents.
5. If unscripted questions are allowed by some in the interview committee members, then that ability should be extended to all interview committee members.

REIAC submitted a list of interview questions pertaining to racial equity. We continue to add to and refine this list of questions. Some of these questions were used in recent interviews.

Regarding Racial Equity Initiative Expenses

The Board has allocated funds for twenty people to attend the workshop Undoing Racism. Four members of REIAC have signed up for the Undoing Racism and are thankful for the opportunity. We recommend that the opportunity to attend the November session be shared with all teachers and that all teachers who volunteer be supported in attending.

We further recommend that the opportunity be extended to school social workers, school psychologists, and guidance counselors as well as the diverse population of staff that interact in an unstructured way with students (i.e., bus drivers, lunchroom and playground monitors, etc.) This is an intense workshop and requires that participants be interested and open to the experience. We are not recommending requiring this workshop.

Regarding 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?

Outstanding Items

There is still some information that REIAC requires:

- 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.

- Further explanation about the hiring process. Some question we have: Who screens the initial responses? What criteria do they screen for? How do they narrow down from the OLAS selection?