

Meeting of the  
School Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) Subcommittee  
Monday, February 5, 2024  
5:00 PM – 6:25 PM  
Remote via Zoom

*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) Subcommittee Members present:* Valerie Frias (Chair), Steven Ehrenberg, Natalia Linos, and Mariah Nobrega.

*Other School Committee members present:* Helen Charlupski, Andreas Liu, David Pearlman.

*Staff present:* Claire Galloway-Jones, Director of Educational Equity; Christina Hernandez, Assistant Director of Educational Equity; Susan Givens, Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance; and Betsy Fitzpatrick.

**1. Approval of Minutes of the January 16, 2024 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Subcommittee**

On a motion of Dr. Linos, and seconded by Ms. Nobrega, the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) Subcommittee voted, by roll call, with 3 in favor (Ms. Frias, Dr. Linos, and Ms. Nobrega), 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions, to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2024 DEIJ Subcommittee meeting. Dr. Ehrenberg was not present for the vote.

**2. Overview of the Coalition for Anti-Racist Education (CARE)**

PSB parents Colin Stokes and Erika Anderson joined the meeting to share information about the Coalition for Anti-Racist Education (CARE). CARE was started by the former Director of Educational Equity, Dr. Kalise Wornum, to provide parents and caregivers with an avenue to use their unique skills and roles to further educational equity in the district. After Dr. Wornum's departure from the district, Jenee Uttaro continued the work. After Ms. Uttaro's departure several of the CARE parents and caregivers kept meeting to continue to organize and advocate for equity and anti-racism initiatives in the school district. CARE has parent/caregiver representatives in about half of our schools; with a leadership of around 10 people, and a listserv that reaches about 100 people. Ms. Anderson highlighted some of the successes of the equity and inclusion initiatives at the Florida Ruffin Ridley School, and about the importance of strengthening these school-based activities where they exist and creating them where they do not. Equity should be foundational to the entire district, which will require structural change. CARE supports two concrete steps, proposed by the Office of Educational Equity, toward making this structural change: the Equity Audit, and the Equity Leads (2 in each school, one for K-5 and one for 6-8). Funding for these items would demonstrate that equity is a central part of the district's work, and is a priority that the district values. Members look forward to seeing a draft scope of work for the Equity Leads, to ensure the responsibilities are realistic and staff will be set-up for success (the proposal calls for a \$2,000 stipend for each educator who serves as an Equity Lead; there is no FTE release, rather this is additional work that the Equity Leads will undertake with OEE to advance equity initiatives in their school building). Members had questions about the Equity Audit, and whether it is wise to invest in a study to document the disparities and disproportionalities that we already know exist. Wouldn't it be wiser to turn toward action steps (as outlined in the Strategic Plan)? Members thanked Ms. Anderson and Mr. Stokes for joining today's meeting.

**3. Public Comment**

Leora Faiber, PSB parent, addressed the subcommittee on the issue of hate speech. She urges the School Committee to create a policy on hate speech, which includes anti-Semitism, not just

because of the Hamas attack of October 7, but because of the historical persecution that Jews have faced. The policy should also protect students from all other religions.

#### **4. Discussion: Hiring and Retention Metrics/Procedures for the Annual PSB Workforce Report**

Dr. Givens joined the meeting to discuss the hiring and retention metrics that will be needed to prepare the annual district report that is required under the new policy (G 2 n): Equity Policy – Staff Recruitment and Retention. Ms. Frias shared the reporting requirements that are embedded in the policy, noting that the report must be presented annually: in October to the DEIJ subcommittee, and in December to the full School Committee. A similar report (of incomplete data taken from the DESE submission) was presented to the Committee in 2022, but no report was presented in 2023. Dr. Givens described some of the current work being done for hiring and retention, including revised onboarding forms that are more welcoming and may serve to increase response rates; regular check-ins with new hires to boost retention; and development of exit surveys. She also outlined some of the challenges to gathering the requested data, including different data platforms, each collecting somewhat different demographic data, that don't connect with each other; data fields in the onboarding process that don't represent the types of data the subcommittee wants to capture and study; and the fact that staff provide demographic information on a voluntary basis. The data collection effort this year was also hampered by staff turnover in the Human Resources team. Dr. Givens suggested that this is a great opportunity to carefully review what we currently collect, decide what it is that we want to collect, and start to build the system of data collection that will produce the information required under the policy. Ms. Frias agreed that two members of the subcommittee will be tasked with meeting with Dr. Givens to discuss this further so that a system can be developed to ensure the annual report is completed and presented in accordance with the policy.

#### **5. Menstrual Hygiene Products Access By-Law, including implementation in the PSB**

The Brookline Menstrual Hygiene Products Access By-Law was adopted by Town Meeting in 2021. The School Committee supported the Warrant Article that created this by-law and started to implement some of the practices consistent with the intent of the by-law. The by-law (Article 8.39) was recently amended and broadened. The School Committee supported the Warrant Article that broadened and expanded the by-law. The by-law is now known as the Reproductive and Gender Health Access and Equity By-Law, was approved by Town Meeting in May 2023, and received regulatory sign-off from the Massachusetts Attorney General's office in January 2024. Though district staff has already made notable progress in providing equitable access to menstrual hygiene products in most schools, the subcommittee is eager to adopt a policy that codifies this important work. To that end, Ms. Frias will consult with Mr. Pearlman, Chair of the Policy Subcommittee, to determine if the School Committee must first adopt a Town by-law before it can craft a policy under it, or whether the School Committee can craft its own policy that meets the spirit of the by-law while addressing the specific needs of our students and school buildings.

#### **6. New and Business**

There was no new business to report.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25pm.