

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of the Superintendent of Schools
106 Hancock Road, Peterborough, NH 03458-1197

EQUITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

5:30 PM

Location: SAU Finch Room

Minutes

Equity Committee Members: Richard Dunning, Janine Lesser, Liz Swan, and Kevin Pobst

Present: Richard Dunning, Janine Lesser, Liz Swan, Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Dr. Ann Forrest

1. Approval of February 14, 2022 Minutes

Dick Dunning motioned to approve the minutes of February 14, 2022. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.

2. Re-thinking the role and name of the Equity Committee

Liz Swan asked those present if there was any interest in being the Chair.

Liz Swan was nominated as Chair of the Equity Committee.

Liz Swan said that she has noticed, while researching other school districts, that there are policies that oversee Equity Committees.

Thought about what might be addressed as a committee and also goals that might be accomplished has been given.

Dick Dunning said that when we talk about equity in education it will always end with education. He said that Liz has a different approach when looking at it more toward fairness, availability, acceptance, etc.

Kimberly Saunders said that this is part of the Strategic Planning Process. She shared information in the draft plan on goals and objectives toward this.

Liz Swan said that she wonders what value this committee could bring to the table or if this will live in the Strategic Planning.

Kimberly Saunders said that the Board should think about having a larger diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) so that it is not just limited to board members.

Liz said that when looking at equity, a larger committee might be helpful.

Kimberly said that part of this work should be part of a larger community-based DEI group to oversee this section of the Strategic Plan.

Dick Dunning shared his experience while still a principal around a transgender student. He found it enlightening.

Kimberly Saunders suggested that this committee might look at pieces and commit as a board to professional development and also supporting teachers with their teaching practices on topics. An action plan or statement in support of teachers might be helpful. Something that says that if you are teaching to DEI then we are going to support you.

Understanding where certain terminology came from is valuable when letting students know that certain words are unacceptable to use.

Ann Forrest said that we are mainly white, in rural New Hampshire, and we need to educate students to go out into the world that is much more diverse than our little corner of it. It is already uncomfortable to talk about and add layers from the State because no one wants to talk about it.

Liz Swan said that there is a difference in using derogatory language and proper language. Helping young people to treat each other with respect is a focus.

What happened to looking at how scheduling impacts the offering of upper level courses to more students?

The high school has a timeline where they are working toward a recommendation.

The definition of "equity" has been previously adopted.

Discussion took place about students having the ability to take a course regardless of level; at the quarter mark of the course they were either finding success in the course or not. Removing the obstacles that prevent students from taking any course is the aim.

Students who qualify for Free & Reduced Lunch (FRL) are correlated with lower performance. It is also correlated with behavior. If you have a class with a higher FRL population there are often more behavior problems. Education is being interrupted by what is happening with behavior in the classroom.

Perception vs. reality was previously discussed in this committee. Counseling and access were discussed. Those that have access to counseling have a better chance at getting what they need. Those that don't know how, or can't advocate for themselves, suffer.

How can this committee make the work more meaningful?

How as a school system can we advocate for students to advocate for themselves?

A podcast "Nice White Parents" was discussed. Civil Rights only makes progress when a white issue coincides.

When curriculum cycles are done, additional pieces have been built in. This committee could oversee pieces of equity with Strategic Planning.

The global conversation is important to get the picture of what the concerns are. The actions that can be taken fall from there. Someone has to bring up the issue.

Is there a code of conduct commitment in the area of tolerance? There is a focus on the positive behaviors that we expect from students. Clear expectations need to be included in the Code of Conduct.

3. Goal setting

It was suggested to take the goal from the Strategic Plan and make decisions on where to go from there. That will drive the sub goals of this committee.

Give thought into creating a statement at the board level to communicate to teachers that they are supported by the board when teaching diversity, equity, and inclusion. It should be part of an overall plan.

4. Other

On June 23rd, the first draft of the Strategic Plan will come forward.

Janine Lesser motioned to adjourn at 6:36 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok