Affirmative Action and Diversity Committee Draft Minutes
February 22, 2021

Meeting commenced at 7:01
Meghan read the governor’s edict regarding Open Meeting Law
Meghan read a land acknowledgment
Meghan held roll call. Debra Berglin, Patricia Oshman, Susan O’Brien, Meghan Hanawalt, ALex Oshman and Natalie Kanellopoulos were present. Lynne Rhodes and Denise Coleman were absent.

Patricia introduced guest, Eileen Elias.

Eileen gave a brief background of her experience, and hoped to convey the importance of listening sessions to help give our youth a voice. Did a cape wide youth survey on racism in August 2020. Received 70 responses. These were combined with 12 Cape True Colors Youth Racism responses to Instagram survey they had also conducted. The analysis is being reported this evening for the first time.

Eileen shared a power point presentation:

- Students were asked three questions and asked to respond.
- Respondents included African American, LGBTQ, Latinx, Asian, White and individuals with disabilities.
- Have you directly experienced a racial experience?
- Most common occurrences are racist, derogatory language, even among friends.
- Word Cloud represents many of the words students shared.
- Respondents reported a range of feelings
- Some frustration was reported at how situations are dealt with by teachers or employers.
- These frustrations and others are found to be common throughout ALL cape and islands schools
- Asked about whether they witnessed racism as a Bystander
- Differential treatment – teachers, administrators and police
- Friends, family and teachers make racially derogatory and homophobic statements, use racist, homophobic and anti-immigrant language
- Boys in particular were privy to these comments
- Word Cloud captures overall responses heard by bystanders
- What adults can do differently:
  o Take racism more seriously, call students out, implement serious consequences, hold students accountable
  o Conciliatory approaches – talk to and counsel transgressors
o Embrace other cultures
o Three -Listen to and understand

- FHS Responses to Question 3:
  o Listen with intention, nonjudgmentally to the person who has been victimized
  o Recruit hire and represent

Eileen’s take away: *Take it all seriously, talk, educate*

MDESE Report Card Data – provides information on each school’s racial and ethnic composition

MDESE can provide data on the intersection of these groups with student discipline, student retention and graduation rates – culmination of all demographic data – with particular regard to racial issues

  o I(Anybody) see(s) the issues – road map – how do I correct it?
  o Address weaknesses in successful training and education of school personnel on racism, homophobia, stereotyping, differential treatment including microaggressions, and other information essential to overcoming unequal, oppressive, and discriminatory treatment

Transformation of school cultures to address racism and other biases requires systematic, methodical public attention to help address the issues identified.

Publicly thanked Sandy Faiman-Silva for help with analysis

Deb: If Falmouth wanted to do something similar to this, what would be the best way to get youth response?

Eileen: Students had to trust that they were putting their hearts out there and that they would not be taken advantage of. Support came from local youth support group. Also had legislative delegation in partnership. Youth talked to youth. Y-Achievers helped develop the survey.

Identify people and organizations bringing youth together in our community. KEY is peer to peer/youth to youth. Trust of the youth is paramount

Education/Police/Allies

Patricia: how are participants protected from retaliation?

Eileen: survey was 100% confidential

Patricia thanked Eileen

Eileen: Y-Achievers put out the survey and this helped with anonymity
Deb read chat: The Y Achievers tried to go to Falmouth Schools, they were told that they schools did not need them. They were handling the issues themselves.

Eileen: Barnstable No Place for Hate did this in Barnstable. Important to include the youth.

Sue clarified purpose and meaning of Racial/Social Justice Club at FHS spearheaded by Mrs. Gans. Initial idea behind the group was to give students voice to meaningful current curricula suggestions for inter/cross disciplinary work between English and Social Studies. Develop meaningful contemporary work to explore.

Nan Galbraith: Thanks for sharing that report. The data on the profiles.doe.mass.edu site referenced there is shocking. Of 518 staff, 489 are white.

Eileen: Been here for 30 years. Major shift in demographics during that time. There are ways to recruit teachers.

Sandy Faiman-Silva: Thank you very much for the positive comments and for your excellent presentation, Eileen. One area of concern was the number of students who did not know whether they had witnessed or experienced a racial incident. This may speak to the lack of education student have about what is racism and how to identify it.

Eileen: use this report as a catalyst.

Meghan: Superintendent showed attendees how to access DESE data in the school committee meeting two weeks ago. This will be continued tomorrow evening. The light is shining and change will occur.

Eileen: Say what you mean, mean what you say…..be accountable.

Meghan asked for a show of hands to pass over old business.

Unanimous.

Meghan will show the articles for review on the screen and then the committee will vote on whether to support them.

Article 30: Columbus Day

Article 31: Domestic Partnerships – modified legal partnership who do not choose to become “married” would like to have rights in caring for one another “a lighter legal version of marriage”

Article 32: Read land acknowledgment/statement holding this gathering on the property of the Wampanoag

Article 33: Task force on work force sustainability to help with inferior wages, housing and childcare

Unsustainable economy currently
Create a 75K voucher fund for childcare expenses allocated to help families pay – noted these costs are often equal to or more expensive than rent or mortgage

Patricia:

Sue motioned to accept the articles as presented this evening. Deb seconded. All members agreed.

New Business:

Deb: She and Sandy will be talking in front of the Select Board regarding some of the changes in the writing of the job description.

Meghan: Commented that personal networking is important and may be can take suggestions from Nantucket, and/or WHOI

Deb: in order to get a diversified pool – will need to go through avenues that may not obviously be tapped

Deb Are there others in this position on cape? How did they find out about position?

Patricia: Social justice, /services could be a resource – outreach to support us.

Joany joined: need to get together and discuss all aspects of this position, including having a comprehensive list of recruitment streams. Not just a question of having a few more educators of color – does not need to breed additional trauma, but enhances the experience of the person hired and the community for whom they will serve. Housing assistance and other financial…

Joany has reached out to colleagues across the state and she plans to reconnect with them once the position is finalized. Position is jointly supervised by superintendent and town manager – Needs to have confirmed plan. Reiterated some of what Deb spoke of

How does the person who is hired garner support in the community?

Deb agrees with need for support for the person in this position. Chair of D & I at BU School of Social Work – seek advice from other DEI directors and support in that regard as well.

Joany – wants position to take off – wants deep levels of support in place

Meghan – thinking about questions and aware that interviewee may have questions

What three things would you implement to make it easier for the next hire?

Deb: Thinks this will be an ethically complex position. Deb would want to know how the person would sort that out from a decision-making point of view.

Joany: Thinks it is important for this committee to see themselves as part of the process all the way through. Each step – so that AA&DC considered as one of the supports for the new hire, and how wide our reach is…
Deb- before next meeting come prepared with questions

Meghan – Superintendent Duerr will be at our March 8 meeting to share DESE data.

ALex: Why would they want to get into the position, where is the passionate?

Deb: What challenges do you anticipate?

March 8, 2021 at 7:00.

Deb motioned to end the meeting. Sue seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm