

Committee on Student Equity
February 2, 2021
Meeting Minutes

In attendance

- ✓ Lisa Meline, Chair (community)
- ✓ Onisha Cook (Counselor)
- ✓ Elizabeth Vigil (Principal/SSC)
- ✓ Steven Johnson (Golden Empire parent)
- ✓ KiMara Fears (Parent)
- ✓ Kelly Martinez (Teacher)
- ✓ Paul Kato (community)
- ✓ April Braun (Teacher)
- ✓ Joan Nguyen (Guest)
- ✓ Katie Anderson (Guest)

1. WELCOME

The Chair meeting called the meeting to order at 5:38pm and welcomed all attendees.

Two guests from Inclusion Culture were introduced. They provided the Committee with information about their company and the services they provide relative to implicit bias training the Committee is seeking for teachers.

<https://inclusionculture.com>

After the guests left the meeting the Committee discussed the path forward to provide the required training. It was discussed that in addition to the training needed it is important that tools for better communication between staff is also desirable. The site assessment that Inclusion Culture discussed as part of their services seems like an important first step to customize training to Rosemont High School.

Mrs. Vigil confirmed that there is budget for this training and that we should move forward finding referrals and recommendations from the Committee and their individual networks. When at least three services providers are found, Ms. Meline will work with Mrs. Vigil on next steps for soliciting proposals and evaluating services.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Kato to approve the meeting minutes of January 5, 2021. Motion carried.

3. ACTION ITEMS (status)

- Student Handbook edits – *(Richardson/Meline) - no progress.*
- Implicit Bias Training for Teachers and Staff *(Vigil/All) – see #1 above.*
- Student Resource Network *(All) – completed. Two updates are to be made: add Pandemic EBT card info; call the Lutheran church to make sure they are still distributing monthly food baskets.*

4. OLD BUSINESS

The committee voted to approved distribution of the RHS Families Resource document when the two remaining items listed above are completed. Mr. Johnson suggested providing the document to the local schools so they can customize the document to their school sites. Ms. Meline agreed to do this. She will also send to the RCA to see if they will post and distribute as part of their network.

Ms. Fears said she would stop by the Neil Orchard Senior Activities Center on Routier Road to see if this information could be placed there. The Rancho Cordova Park and Recreation Department might be a good place to provide this information as well.

- **Community/Parent Town Hall**

Mrs. Vigil reports that 8-9 families attended the Town Hall on January 16, 2021. The meeting was positive and most of the discussion was focused on when the school was going to be opened up again. Mrs. Vigil will hold these meetings quarterly. The next Town Hall will be in April.

- **Book club**

Mrs. Vigil said that upon recommendation of Ms. Cook, the book We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom by Bettina L. Love has been ordered and has been ordered and will be distributed to staff. It will be discussed at the regular Staff Meetings.

- **Community centers**

The interpretation of this bullet item is looking to the school to be a community center. It was discussed that RHS Families Resource document is an activity that would quality under this topic. Are there others that the Committee would like to discuss or envision?

The remaining items on the list that has been compiled over the last 10 months are as follows. It is requested that all committee members think about these items so that we may prioritize and attack our next project.

- Faculty survey
- Education on Racism (Rally, Assignments, etc.)
- Staff Handbook/Professional Code of Conduct
- SEL (Breaking it into 3 pieces; focusing/[students]identifying themes)
- Google Classroom for Parents
- Student teachers
- Home visits/incoming freshmen
- Student ambassadors

5. NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Vigil requested that Black History Month be discussed and things that we do as part of this celebration. This request was woven into the Roundtable Discussion.

Mrs. Vigil mentioned that the social science teachers are doing something at each grade level.

Ms. Cook asked why this celebration of Black History is typically made the responsibility of black educators? Black History is America History. She suggested that these celebrations be posted on the school site – every day a different quote, photos, etc. This all needs to connect with academics. In addition to the book recommended by Ms. Cook for the staff meetings, she also recommended to the Committee the book We Must Never Forget That Black History Is American History. The Achievements of African Americans Have Contributed to Our Nation's Greatness by Yvette Clarke.

Mr. Kato suggested the book by Albert Camus, The Plague. The discussion around this book was that while we are in the midst of a pandemic, we need to seize this opportunity to do something extraordinary. We should find a way to turn adversity into advantage. Now that the citizens of our country are starting to be vaccinated, the end of the pandemic is nearer and we must work even harder to engage the students and help them to be successful. As a community and as educators we need to plan for 'normal' and what needs to be done in preparation for that – not losing site of the students who are now about to transition from high school to work or college. Mr. Kato also recommended that we might bring Isaac Serwanga, an athlete and motivational speaker, to the RHS students in some way. The following is something you can link to on line to learn more about Mr. Serwanga.

<https://www.comstocksmag.com/writer/isaac-serwanga>

Mr. Kato said that he was pleased that the Committee is doing something positive. In the end it is all about the students.

In support of Ms. Cook's comments about Black History Month and the reminder of our Equity Statement, Ms. Meline suggested that it would be good to celebrate all people including Black History Month. Perhaps information could be posted on the school calendar about all kinds of holidays, celebrations, and traditions. Examples include: Women's History Month (March), Jewish Heritage Month and National Mental Health Month (May), LGBTQ + Pride Month (June) National Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept/Oct), Native American Heritage Month (November), Americans with Disabilities, and so on. We are *one* culture of *many* different people and we *all* need to participate.

Ms. Martinez said that she agreed with Ms. Cook and she also said she thought the implicit bias training is needed. She said it is a difficult subject and said that even though many try to take the initiative to educate themselves, it is challenging.

Ms. Fears suggested that the weekly emails that go out to the students could include something about Black History Month. She also suggested that many people in California do not know about Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This information should be posted on the school website.

Mr. Johnson said he is encouraged that there is budget for the training. He agrees that it is important and that it should be targeted and must be beneficial for the school's (students) success.

Ms. Braun echoed earlier comments and did not realize until this conversation that HBCUs have not been part of the college discussion for our students. She agreed that this information needs to be made available.

6. NEXT MEETING/ADJOURN

The next meeting of the committee will be **Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 5:30pm**. A meeting agenda and Zoom link will be sent out at least one week prior to the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm.