

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Minutes
September 25, 2020

Meeting began at 3:30 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions: Dr. Webb welcomed the committee and thanked them for agreeing to be on the committee. The Committee introduced themselves.

Review of the purpose of the DEI Committee: Dr. Webb explained the purpose of the Committee is to advise the Superintendent and School Committee on policies, programs, trainings, and curriculum regarding the development of cultural competency of diversity, equity and inclusion. It is not an investigative committee.

The objective of today's meeting is to lay the foundation of what we are currently doing and build from there.

The Strategic Plan is a 10-year plan that outlines Bangor's mission and vision for the next 10 years. Diversity in our community is part of our 10-year plan. In March, we have planned a regional training with Dr. Greta Peay, CEO of Infinity: Diversity Matters, LLC, out of Arizona. It is a full day of training. The training promotes cultural responsiveness, diversity and equity to enhance cultural shifts.

Review of current DEI efforts:

Dr. Webb provided an overview of the Policies: Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy, Transgender Student Guidelines, Advisory Committee, Cultural and Religious Holidays, Code of Conduct, Student Self-Expression, Bullying in Schools, Procedure, and the Standards of Conduct for the City of Bangor.

Mike Alpert: I was hoping that the school department still had a policy called, "Respecting Differences." It stated that harassment of any kind was unacceptable. Teachers were able to intervene with the backing of School Committee and Administration. Teachers need to be told clearly what is to be expected.

Dr. Webb asked Assistant Superintendent, Kathy Harris-Smedberg to go over the Equity Awareness trainings that Bangor has completed.

Dr. Harris-Smedberg went over the trainings. In the Fall of 2019, staff by school was provided with in-person training that focused on micro aggressions, macro aggressions, micro insults, implicit biases and unconscious biases. Trainings also addressed inequalities among a wide variety of groups found in Bangor, as well research on how make classrooms more welcoming an inclusive. In June trainings focused on recognizing and understanding perspectives of varying races, cultures, and ethnicities. June training was presented via training videos, and school led discussions. During the last week of August, every staff member was required to participate in training with Racial Equity & Justice. The training was a day-long training with Desiree Vargas and David Patrick and focused on identities, historical perspectives, and inclusion. The BSD is

committed to providing all children an environment that is a safe for them to learn, regardless of any identifying characteristic.

Curriculum Review:

Dr. Harris-Smedberg: We are using Second Step Social-Emotional Learning which is a research based program for Gr. PreK-8. It is a program that helps develop friendships, show respect to others. It helps with emotion management, situational awareness, and academic achievement.

Paul Buter: BHS is building off of the Second Step Program and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Standards. In the first 2 weeks of school, we have been working on discreet lessons on social skills. We have the Sandy Hook training – See Something, Say Something. We've added electives on human rights.

Stephanie Hendrix: In the English Department, we are investigating thematic courses. Strategic methods will substantially help teachers to know how to handle situations responsibly. Teachers need more training. It has been very positive.

Geoff Wingard: We've enjoyed developing curriculum on thematic courses. We started about 3 years ago.

Dr. Webb: There has been a curriculum review across all grade levels.

Johanna Bridges: In the World Languages Department, we celebrate a number of other cultures. We are working to incorporate – to normalize – the fact that we represent everyone. We are breaking down the stereotypes. We are trying to have more inclusion. There is more work to be done.

Dr. Webb: It is important for students to see themselves in the curriculum.

Lynn Silk: We have done a really nice job incorporating naturally throughout the year. We have been analyzing our libraries for any person books. We just received a grant to further that effort.

Carin Sychterz: All of these steps have been well received. Curriculum is most important. It is helpful to have an understanding of the requirements.

Dr. Webb: All pieces will have to come together. Stephanie Hendrix has a Civil Rights Team. The middle schools have also added a Civil Rights Team this year. We have clubs at the elementary level.

Stephanie Hendrix: We have a Student Minority Union who is actively working to revise the constitution and mission of the club. We are creating a space for students of color to find solidarity and solace. We will bring these groups together.

Dr. Webb shared that the equity definitions and language was added to the student handbooks. We also did an update to the Bangor App to include the discrimination tip line.

We have a new position at the high school. It is for a Title IX and Affirmative Action Officer. Lynn Silk is the PreK-8 Title IX officer.

Lynn Silk: The Title IX officer job entails investigations of complaints or issues. Title IX is gender based and has to do with equity. I make sure policies and practices are clear. This year there is a major update to new reporting. The Title IX Officer and the Affirmative Action Officer work together.

Dr. Webb: Dan Chadbourne is the PreK-8 Affirmative Action Officer.

Dan Chadbourne: We do a 3-prong investigation – action, accountability, and education. For the education component, we discuss policy and law. Does a student have connections in the building? We have a therapeutic resource. Our priority is making students feel safe.

Members will be considering talking points for faculty discussions and reviewing the mission and vision statements for the meeting next month.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:29 p.m.