

DEI Advisory Committee
December 4, 2020

Meeting began at 3:30 p.m.

Dr. Harris-Smedberg welcomed everyone. She asked that Dana Carver-Bialer introduce herself. Dana introduced herself. She asked the Committee to introduce themselves, the pronoun that they use, roles within the Bangor School Department, and to mention one thing that they are looking forward to by our next meeting.

Dana went over the Committee's norms and expectations. She asked if anyone had any additional norms and expectations to add.

Sarah Twomley: It is okay to acknowledge that this is a different committee than normal committees. This may be more sensitive and emotional and that is okay.

Marwa Hassanien: What happens here stays here. We need to have trust with the group.

Paul Butler: It would be nice to have a shared folder in google so we can see how this committee evolves.

Dana explained that we should establish a good starting point. She went over Bangor's strengths and growing opportunities.

Earlier in the week, Dana sent out a mini survey to the Committee. She showed us a chart to show what goals the Committee thought were most important. She then asked, "What are our goals?"

Lynn Silk: I'm interested in a curriculum that has kids read about characters they can relate to. We have added some books to our library that shows a diversified group of people in the stories.

Michael Alpert: We should start with the complaints of the students. We should be deliberate in our criticism.

Shelley Okere: I agree. We should start with the complaints. That is what caused us to join this committee to begin with.

Marwa Hassanien: Has the list been shared publicly? I worked on policies with the young ladies that brought up the accusations. We could, as a committee, do more work with student education and teacher training.

Dr. Harris-Smedberg: We are addressing the needs of what the students presented. The list was shared at a School Committee meeting.

Stephanie Hendrix: We should advocate for smart scaffolding of our efforts. We need to train teachers before we train our students. We should do an equity audit.

Sarah Twombly: Agreed. Teachers need the framework.

Dana Carver-Bialer: We are providing tools to facilitate the curriculum.

Clare Mundell: Can we get an update on the investigation?

Dr. Harris-Smedberg: The investigation is not completed. The lawyer needs a couple of weeks to wrap it up.

Clare Mundell: Is the investigation confidential? I understand that another district is doing an equity audit. She also shared about an equity audit occurring in a Maine school district.

Dr. Harris-Smedberg: Some of it will be confidential due to minors involved and potential personnel findings. My understanding is that there will be a public report reporting generalized fact finding. There are a number of districts that are doing equity audits. Dana has much experience in this area and could probably help us if we chose to move in that direction.

Dana Carver-Bialer: I have been looking at the goals of the school department. I am able to do an equity audit.

Shelley Okere: I am agreeing with a lot of what is being said. Zoom does not allow people to see that I am just nodding my head.

Michael Alpert: Is it possible for me to get the contact information for the investigator?

Dr. Harris-Smedberg: Yes, I can get that for you. Can you email me with that question for a reminder?

Dana Carver-Bialer: How do we get to our goals? There is a potential for sub committees. The most important goals we should look at are in-service training for teachers, educational enrichment for students and current events (investigation).

Sarah Twombly: We need a decision matrix – students, teachers. We should have a clear, protected path.

Michael Alpert: I would like to get back to restorative justice as a punishment. I would like to see us change the discipline policy.

Dana Carver-Bialer: This is an advisory committee. We can work to provide feedback and suggestions so that Dr. Harris-Smedberg would bring any changes to School Committee for approval.

Marwa Hassanien: Yes, that is our responsibility. (The School Committee approves policy.)

Dr. Harris-Smedberg: There is a process in developing policies and this committee is one part of a greater whole with many groups contributing. Additionally, we do have to follow legal obligations before any changes are made to policies.

Dana Carver-Bialer: How do you want meetings to look? We could have sub committees and have one member bring the information to this committee. Do we want guest speakers? Should we have people on this committee share their experiences? Does anyone want to share a specific skill set or identity?

Sarah Twombly: Action steps for our next meeting should be the following:

- Trust – reach out and say hi to someone on this committee
- Survey for sub committees
- Open field – what format should the meetings follow

Next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2021.

Meeting adjourned 4:30 p.m.