Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: April 5, 2022
Location: Via Google Meet

Attendance: Ariana Glick, Becky Milburn, Sarah Murray, Trinity Poon, Carly Smith, Michael Pell, Tessa Cary, Kathleen Reynolds, Lisa Kent, Connor Green, Diana Ganju, Sarah Murray, Kristin Bader, and guest speaker Candace Julyan

Call to order 6:03pm by Trinity Poon

- Pledge of Allegiance recited
- Group Norms and intent statement read and dates of calendar acknowledgement by Trinity Poon.
- DEI Dates for April: see below (read by Kathleen Reynolds)

Public Forum: None

Guest Speaker: Candace Julyan, Pathways to Restorative Communities. Introduced by Connor Green

Candace Julyan works with Pathways to Restorative Communities, to highlight social responsibility in strengthening their mindset around restorative justice, as well as in schools and communities. Mostly located and in effect in New England, since the pandemic they are able to branch out nationally. Ms. Julyan started with an exercise on highlighting what restorative justice is, it was an interactive exercise with the committee. Restorative justice is not about punishment, it is a relationship based way of thinking about things. Who has been harmed, What do they need, Who is responsible are the three questions that need to be addressed. Punitive vs. Restorative disciplines were discussed. In school areas this is usually called restorative practices. Three distinct practices: restorative conferences, restorative chats, and community building circles. Information regarding these practices will be sent and links will be attached. There was discussion from both Lisa Kent and Carly Smith on how RULER and Responsive Classroom is a little similar however in the older grades 5th and up there are things happening that need more of a restorative practice initiative. Carly stated that it would be nice for the students to be able to become the ones that can lead the circles, Candace stated that in time it does happen. Candace also stated that the “buy in” for schools does take time and that it takes years for it to become student directed. Candace also stated that it takes training and implementation within the schools, 5-7 years within some schools. Carly also stated that with the shift of programs within the schools it is hard to hold onto the directives and policies without the guaranteed time for allocation. Becky Milburn asked Carly if she thought that some of the issues at Oak Ridge would be more focused on 5th and 6th grade or 3-6th, Carly stated that it would be all the grades. Diana was also asked by Becky regarding the ADL initiative and how that was working with student run groups, Diana explained that it would be rolling out in earnest next year with students leading the way through the curriculum sequence. Becky stated that as a committee we had looked into having restorative practices brought into Sandwich District, we will be looking to see if this is something that can be implemented into the district and how. Connor will continue to be in communication with Candace.

School Updates from admin:

Sarah Murray, Forestdale: Stated that Forestdale is working hard on using RULER within the Staff to grow this SEL information within the school environment.
• **Updates on Committee Vacancies:** Kristi Bader stated that there will be some vacancies with graduating students as well as Margot Critchfield resigning. Turnover time is June 30, 2022. There will be a reconfiguration at the time of new members, Kathleen Reynolds stated that her term is up in June, she will think about possibly staying on.

• **DEIAC Handbook Updates:** Kristi Bader stated that the Handbook was presented to the School Committee and that they will be voting on it 4/6/2022. There was some discussion at the school committee regarding that our role is advisory only and that it needed to be clear within the handbook. There is also a statement about if 3 consecutive meetings are missed that there might be a concern broached for replacement if it is needed. Becky asked for clarification regarding speaking with the public in a way that would allow for information to flow in an organic manner, Kristi stated that she understands that frustration and going forward we should just be aware of reaching out to administration directly. Kristi also stated that if we have concerns coming to the school committee voice our concerns would be helpful. Diana Ganju stated that the list that is presented for DEIAC from the school committee might be a little misleading and perhaps there should be a little more clarification for the advisory committee. Kristi stated anything that we might need her to represent to the school committee she will, she mentioned that having members appearing at the school committee will also be helpful.

• **Community Policy Recommendations:**
  
  a link to a document regarding this was shared, Becky Milburn went over some of the highlights in regards to this. All members should look at document and we will vote on it at the May meeting.
  
  [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yZ7nFG3SYzSW71vwo8U7VLbqC8JU4NdlMsosq7s-Y6FY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yZ7nFG3SYzSW71vwo8U7VLbqC8JU4NdlMsosq7s-Y6FY/edit?usp=sharing)

• Trinity Poon addressed the **meeting notes** from 3/8/22, Lisa Kent motioned to approve, Carly Smith seconded by, unanimously approved to accept.

• **Public Forum:** none

• **Any other topics not anticipated:** Becky Milburn spoke with Charity O’Neill O’Kane regarding any other possible recommendations that might be needed going forward. Diana Ganju stated that in the handbook it should be highlighted regarding religious and cultural absences and the calendar, Diana researched other districts and their language in the handbooks, perhaps tweaking the language or calendar, it would be good if we could have some recommendations for updating handbook language across the distinct. Diana suggested that May would be a good time to discuss this and perhaps put it to an intended vote to bring to the School Committee. Becky Milburn asked if coaches would also be DEI trained, Diana Ganju stated that through the ADL there is an opportunity for them to be trained. ADL has a guideline on how to deal with difficult situations that might arise, for both students and staff. Kathleen Reynolds stated that she felt it was great that many would be involved in training, everyone would like to see this occur, possibly a vote on this at the next meeting. Kristi Bader stated that there was an advocacy group sending out emails regarding an incident that occurred at the high school, the parents of the student have reached out to advocacy groups for support, emails have been received by the DEIAC and other groups in the district. The school committee is involved and is aware of the situation. It was noted that as an advisory committee we should not respond to an email
regarding this. It was also mentioned that communication within the district will help foster acceptance and guidance in all areas. Becky Milburn reflected on the fact that we are still not fully aware of all the things that are being done within the district, she mentioned possibly another workshop in possibly June. Carly Smith also stated that she agreed with Becky and that we do need to connect with the greater community to allow others to see what is occurring. Kathleen Reynolds agreed with Becky and Carly. Diana stated that increasing the back and forth communication with the school committee would be a great goal as the action keeps the “ball in the air”, this might be a better fit than a workshop at the end of the school year. Carly asked if we could put on the next agenda putting how we communicate with the community and with the school committee with a detailed schedule that allows for goal posts. Our communication should be deemed as “more frequent, less intense” when we are communicating with community members and the school committee, as well as others.

- **Closing Remarks and Thanks** by Trinity Poon, thanked all
- Motion to adjourn by Diana Ganju, seconded by Kathleen Reynolds, unanimously agreed.
- Unanimous vote to adjourn at 7:57 pm

Signed by:

*Lisa C. Penn*

Secretary