

SCHOOL COMMITTEE EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

REMOTE MEETING

MAY 18, 2022

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: June 16, 2022
TIME: 2:44 PM

Present: Ms. Amy Checkoway
Mr. Jeffrey Liberty

Ms. Chon'tel Washington, Director of DEI

Absent: Mr. Jamal Carlos Saeh

1. Call to Order

Member Checkoway called the equity subcommittee meeting to order at 2:00 pm. Members Checkoway and Liberty determined that Checkoway will serve as Chair for the day, in Mr. Saeh's absence, and Member Liberty will serve as notetaker. Two members of the public also attended this meeting.

2. DEI Updates

Ms. Washington opened the meeting by saying that she will be presenting an update on the district equity audit at the next School Committee meeting on May 24, and is still figuring out how best to share information generally with this subcommittee.

Ms. Washington next provided updates/highlights on DEI initiatives across the district which include (but are not limited to):

- Each schools has its own equity team.
- Chenery: CMS Learns: series that equity team developed to focus on knowledge and awareness of how to respond to microaggressions and bias incidents, and how to have conversations about these topics. Students are invited to bring in their personal stories. This happens in the morning in homerooms and resources are shared. The feedback has been interesting: students are learning a lot and find it useful to learn how to talk about microaggressions.
- Winn Brook: AAPI guest reader program
- Wellington: Mindfulness and deep breathing; multiple meetings (8) with outside consultants, action plan in collaboration with BECA
- Book study: The Color of Us
- Lot of work about MTSS and UDL and connection to Culturally Responsive Teaching and equity: trying to connect all of these frameworks
- Culturally Responsive Teaching committee: asset-based framing to give educators tools. Planning a PD opening day on this topic next year.

- June 24 session: IDEAS professional development for leadership council, principals, select educators, and School Committee members (Chair Moriarty plans to attend). Facilitators are coming to do this training.
- Superintendent participated in Massachusetts REDI program all year long.
- District equity team

Member Liberty asked how incidents are being tracked, and if there are data about the number of incidents in schools and how we are responding. Ms. Washington responded that she has developed a tool to track such incidents with IT. Principals do not always know who the perpetrators are (e.g., social media pages, swastikas in a snowbank). Member Liberty commented that it is important to track and share data on a quarterly basis, as it helps to understand seasonal rhythms and any patterns, advocate for needed resources, and communicate the nature of the challenges in our schools with the community.

Ms. Washington asked how the district can share this information with the School Committee and the community. Member Checkoway said that from her point of view, she would be interested in regular written updates about what is happening in the district. Member Liberty added that it is important to say what is being tried and why the specific things are being tried.

Ms. Washington said that in terms of questions about the impact of the work, we can make it more equity-centered by asking who is benefitting? who is marginalized? how would we expand the benefits and reduce the marginalization? Member Liberty responded that we have to be able to quantify the impact in some way and also say how we know what we know about the benefits of what we are trying as well as whether there is broad community understanding and support.

Community member Jason Ketola commented that this is the most informational subcommittee meeting that he has attended and that the summary was great.

3. Post-Equity Audit Conversations

Ms. Washington explained that there were more people that the district equity audit workgroup wanted to hear more from including the PTOS, METCO parents, SEPAC parents, and the equity subcommittee. Next year the district will also meet quarterly with the DEI partners group including BAR, the Belmont Human Rights Commission, and the Belmont Pan-Asian Coalition. She wondered if someone from the equity subcommittee should be part of this group. She wants to talk with students more as well.

If people have specific actions they think should be taken, Ms. Washington asks to please share them as they pull together the district equity plan. They have a meeting coming up with the Asian American Club, GSA, Student Council, and BECA. They would like to hear more from elementary teachers as well.

Yesterday's community meetings were attended by 52 people (12 in the afternoon session and 40 in the evening session).

Member Liberty commented that we have to put the Equity Audit findings alongside the things we are trying, what it costs, what we expect for outcomes, and how it is going.

Ms. Washington commented that sometimes it feels like people are questioning the harm to children; we have lots of information that there is an issue here and that there has been a challenge in the district so it is a matter of giving the community what it needs to understand.

Ms. Checkoway commented that she wanted to name that there is some confusion and overlap about SPED concerns versus racial equity, and it would be helpful to be clear about what we are doing and trying to accomplish. Ms. Washington noted that the SEPAC leader said that SEPAC had not been engaged with this work, although they have been.

Ms. Checkoway flagged that there will be questions at the SC meeting about what is next and what the SC's role can be and should be. She wants this to be a helpful collaboration and knows that we can also contribute individually (e.g., policy) as we look forward.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Checkoway at 3:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Checkoway". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.