

**New Hope – Solebury School District
Equity Committee Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2021**

Dr. Lentz, committee chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, via Zoom. There were approximately 30 people in attendance.

Dr. Lentz explained the shift in meeting time for this month was as a result of survey responses asking for more flexibility for people who cannot attend at 4:00 PM. Going forward we hope to alternate meeting times between 4 and 6 pm to accommodate everyone.

Dr. Lentz introduced new members Michelle Reynolds, Intensive Learning Support teacher in the MS and Stephanie Yoder, the district's new community outreach manager.

Erik Pedersen reported that the presentation subcommittee has not met since February (next meeting March 15) but that the HS student committee has met twice to discuss programming. Their main focus right now is mental health and they have identified a potential speaker, more information forthcoming. They have been discussing partnerships with student equity committees in other districts, with the goal of establishing sustainable relationships. Montu Patel asked what other models exist locally, and Mr. Pedersen said they have been talking to Cheltenham. Not many other groups exist locally – Mr Patel indicated he has had several inquiries from other boards as to how we established our committee.

Brian Shaffer reported that the resources committee has gathered lists of K-12 library titles; created a summer reading list and a film library; and worked with Mrs. Miller to establish four themes for the elementary school to explore next year. All of these resources will be available shortly on a new resources website. The subcommittee will report more details at the Curriculum Advisory Committee meeting on Thursday, March 11.

There was no report from the policy committee, but Dr. Lentz indicated that they can begin their work now that the mission and vision have been finalized.

Dr. Magerman discussed the results from the recent community survey. An executive summary is available at nhsd.org. Discussion topics included: parents are comfortable discussing social identities with their children (defined as race, gender, ability, etc) but less comfortable having teachers do the same for fear of agenda or bias. Similarly, teachers fear backlash when teaching these topics. Contact with other communities and social groups is key to reducing bias – district should create opportunities for students to engage. 64% believe there are inequities in the district, and student and parent interviews revealed “persistent experience of prejudice among students.” 36% of survey respondents indicated they have experienced prejudice at school. Student committee members indicated that discrimination is typically so nuanced – ie microaggressions – that it is difficult to respond to or to report. An experience of “invisibility” – identity being devalued or not recognized – was also reported. There is overwhelming support for an inclusive curriculum that reflects the US population, with the majority of respondents stating that multicultural education should start in Kindergarten. There was wide support for professional development for faculty and staff.

Dr. Lentz discussed the recent committee survey, which garnered 19 responses, the majority positive. Most respondents were happy with the committee progress and excellent feedback was given as to the

organization and logistics of the committee work. There were mixed reviews on the breakout room process. Suggestions included having a presence at events in town, growing student participation, and establishing a google doc for members to submit agenda items.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM. The next members' meeting will be held via Zoom on April 12 at 4:00 PM.