

**New Hope – Solebury School District
Equity Committee Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2020**

Dr. Lentz called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. There were 25 participants via Zoom.

Dr. Lentz introduced the purpose of the meeting: to form subcommittees and to discuss long-term committee goals.

Breakout groups reported back on long-term planning:

- Equity is not a discrete project
- How do we discuss “invisible” diversity in class?
- How can students learn more about the world, get involved in protests?
- Socioeconomic equity – it is a misnomer that there are only haves and havenots. Be mindful of economic diversity
- Remember learning differences in context of equity
- How can community members contribute? Look for local experts and leverage their work to support district change.

Dr. Magerman gave an update on the community survey, which opened in late September:

- Over 400 responses came in in 2 days, currently around 600 total
- Majority respondents to date are female, Caucasian, liberal, local residents, parents
- Survey to close Nov. 1
- 60 consented to follow up interviews with 23 completed to date
- 80-100 student responses would be ideal

Dr. Lentz discussed new subcommittees: Resource Library, Policy, and Community Programming. The committee broke out into groups to discuss finding resources in the community, and made the following suggestions:

- Look for organizations that work toward race and gender equality, ie Bucks Anti-Racism Council
- What can be used in the classroom? Looks for both teacher and peer resources, ie *This Book is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work* (Tiffany Jewell). Use our librarians, they are excellent.
- Ask parents for advice and input
- What are best practices for discussing gender identity?
- Performances – bring in diverse groups, ie Lady Hoofers (tap group from Philly)
- Summer reading list – good opportunity for introducing new titles and authors. Outgoing 8th graders could suggest for younger grades. Diverse picture books very important for representation in elementary. Keep students in forefront.

Resource Library:

- Curriculum should include diverse/equitable/inclusive books, strong and intentional library.
- Start early – K – teaching tolerance for young kids. Go beyond curriculum, share important experiences, speakers, partnerships, pen pals outside school.

- Many students have not experienced inequity, are unaware of what is outside the “bubble.”
- Create opportunities for experiential learning – not just binders of resources. Make learning active – workshops, turnaround professional development, create an “equity lens.”
- Culture needs to change.
- Relate equity work back to comprehensive plan.
- Equity needs to live within every committee – how do we make that happen?

Policy:

- What are the areas of concern? What do we hope to achieve in developing an equity policy? What are the issues we feel an equity policy might be able to address? What is missing from current policies?
 - The methods are as important as the policies
 - Students don’t know where to go or know they have a place. “Who am I in this school?”
 - Form student groups, make a home for them + allies.
 - What are desired policy outcomes?
 - Who is in the room? Who is missing? How do policies fill that gap?
 - Communication is key. Training and role-playing.
 - There should be no barriers to extracurricular activities, financial or otherwise
 - Intentional recruiting- diversify staff
 - Make all stakeholders part of the conversation
 - Initial policy could be broad – faster to enact, then refine over time. Maintain accountability
 - Equity policy shouldn’t be a standalone policy – should be woven into all existing policies. Equity should be a lens.
 - What are consequences for inequity? I.e, Make bullying a teachable moment toward reform
 - What is the committee’s role in changing the status quo?
 - Is there a policy for ELL learners?

Community Programming:

- What types of presenters should we bring in? What resources and organizations? What can we provide, and who is our audience?
 - Local suggestions: Doylestown bookshop, Farleys, etc – partner book events
 - National Council for Teachers of English
 - Look to other districts for ideas – do we need a consortium of Bucks equity committees?
 - Being virtual can expand possibilities, broaden our reach
 - Storytelling. Civic engagement. Be interactive, not lectures
 - Use assemblies – bring in young activists to talk to students, relate to their experiences in other school districts
 - Connect to Apex projects
 - Peer learning is key.
 - How do we talk to those who don’t buy in? How do we reach those who most need to learn?
 - Focus on kids always, tie to achievement?
 - Content and presentation at youngest levels – need to create long-term exposure to equity ideals for it to reach normalcy

Next meeting November 24, 2020 (postponed to December 15)