

**New Hope – Solebury School District
Equity Committee Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2020**

Dr. Lentz, committee chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM, via Zoom.

The committee broke into groups to discuss group goals, desired qualities and characteristics of an equitable school district. Feedback and questions included:

- equity as a mindset, not a discrete project
- preparing students for life beyond NHS to avoid culture shock
- how do we reach every sub-community? Do we address in phases?
- Define equity vs equality for the public
- NHS needs a cultural shift – address the way kids talk to one another
- Keep students central
- How do we address inherent bias? Can we schedule awareness trainings?

Dr. Magerman summarized the community survey results, which will be published for the public and discussed in greater detail at the next meeting. 783 people responded and 50 interviews were conducted. Main takeaways: the district should cultivate community engagement for students to expose them to a broader variety of experiences, people, and viewpoints. The committee needs a high level of transparency for parents around curriculum changes – survey indicates a fear of political agenda around teaching topics of race and social identities.

Erik Pedersen reported on the presentation subcommittee. At the last meeting, the subcommittee discussed growing cultural competency across all grade levels, with a potential K-6 and 7-12 split. Presenters could include a diverse range of music, dance, art, politics. Should be student led – what do they want? Mr. Pedersen has established a student equity committee at the high school that includes 10 dedicated students so far. They echoed the need for greater exposure to diverse people and opinions. One student is working on a cultural awareness component for Spirit Week. They also discussed curriculum: what isn't connecting? As well as connecting to alumni and establishing peer work and role playing. The next subcommittee meeting is Jan. 7.

Chris Schwartz gave the policy subcommittee update. They are very early in the process but discussed defining committee goals; working on an equity statement; creating policy to achieve buy-in from stakeholders; and looking to model policies in other school districts and PSBA resources.

Dr. Lentz reported for the resource subcommittee. They discussed finding common themes across grade levels for programs like one book/one district or Read Across the World. Their target groups are students, teachers, and parents. Resources include films, podcasts, articles, literature, data, as well as partnerships with area organizations like Peace Center, ADL, and PCCY. Crossover with presentation subcommittee.

The committee broke into groups again to discuss what defines equity in NHSD. What are the key components and how will we know when equity is achieved?

- Meet students where they are

- Equity is not an end point – will be successful when the district has the policies, protocols, and procedures in place to hear and meet the needs of all students
- Fair and just opportunity for everyone to meet their potential
- Free from discrimination and bias
- Eliminate policies and procedures that serve as barriers
- Distinguish equity from equality
- Look to and teach from examples in history of overcoming bias
- Equity is the process, equality is the outcome
- Don't give up – equity is a moving target
- Look to advance to equity as a foundation, root of district operations
- Include measurable goals

Groups discussed: what would an equitable district look like? What are the ultimate goals? 5-10 year changes?

- Less of a bubble. NHS has a diverse label but homogenous substance
- Connect talk with action. How do students participate in the change they want to see? How do we change how they interact with one another?
- 5-10 year goal: equity is a foundation, not a topic
- Teaching with intent. Train teachers to have difficult conversations/lead discussions around literature, etc with race as context
- Sustained interest and engagement
- kids would not be afraid to express themselves
- create realistic milestones
- anti-racism and white privilege incorporated into curriculum
- create a safe place for all

Dr. Lentz adjourned the meeting at 6:10. Links and resources will be shared with the committee ahead of the next meeting.