

**New Hope – Solebury School District
Equity Committee Meeting Minutes
March 22, 2022**

Dr. Lentz called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. There were approximately 25 attendees on Zoom and in person in the district.

Dr. Lentz reminded co-chair Liz Sheehan that we are missing minutes from February – they will be submitted this week.

Dr. Lentz provided a recap of the town hall subcommittee meeting from March 2. The members discussed the format, agenda, and potential participants. Topics to be covered at the town hall include the established committee norms; a brief history of the equity work in NHSD and why the need for the committee exists; the work in each building by the respective equity leaders; work of student committees; and the strategic planning process for long-term goals. The intent is to prioritize the people doing the work. There will be time for a Q&A at the end. The town hall will be in person with livestreaming available (online participants may submit questions in advance to be read during the meeting). Dates TBA in April/early May. There was discussion about participation of the Bucks County Anti-Racism Coalition, as well as tying the presentation into the district profile of a graduate.

The agenda item of socioeconomic concerns with Spirit Week participation was tabled because the member who requested the discussion could not be present.

Dr. Lentz discussed the recent concerns of anti-Semitic behavior in the district and reflected on his recent letter to the community. He reported that the administration has worked to develop relationships with local leaders and organizations to assist in the district's response to the community in matters of bias and discrimination – for example, with the recent anti-Semitic incidents, Dr. Lentz reached out to area rabbis, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Peace Center. This network will be a strong partner for the district, as well as a resource for the equity committee, and will allow the administration to respond quickly and transparently as a team to complex issues when they arise.

This discussion led to a question from a committee member about possible “overkill,” in the form of district-wide response, to “only three small incidents.” Many members responded that they believed the district acted appropriately in accordance with a zero tolerance policy, particularly given that historically, the administration would endeavor to respond quietly, which contributed to the misconception that bias and discrimination doesn't happen in NHSD. A student member pointed out that overkill is better than the alternative, and issues need to be squelched - district action signals support for our community, and without broad communication, rumors spread. Another member stated that transparency allows parents to discuss incidents with their children and to encourage them to say something when they see

something – issues are always broader than the students who happen to get caught. Students know what is going on and see when adults fail to respond. The member who posed the initial question pointed to the importance of historical context in district communications in these matters, particularly for the benefit of newer parents or those unfamiliar with past events of this nature.

Dr. Lentz reported that the equity policy comments were received, and the policy is ready to forward to the policy committee for review.

Dr. Lentz shared the news that the Anti-Defamation League’s No Place for Hate program has selected NHSD for recognition, out of all the school districts with whom they work. NHSD will be the featured spotlight school district in the 2022-2023 No Place for Hate Resource Guide. The administration is honored and excited to showcase the district’s equity work in this publication.

The balance of the meeting was led by Dr. Emily Kalahan, Senior Equity Training Manager for the PA School Board Association, who focused on long-term goal setting for the district. Discussion included thinking about levels of goals: district/board/committee and how to triage. Goal setting is a process, and Dr. Kalahan believes that NHSD is at the third step: synthesize. Next steps will be to prioritize, then create objectives (part 2 will happen at the April meeting). She discussed general, big picture goals (the “what”) vs measurable, actionable objectives (the specific “how”) and that equity work requires different metrics beyond traditional goal setting. We need to be direct and measurable in an area where success, in the form of behavioral change, is often hard to quantify.

Dr. Kalahan shared steps from the text *The 4 Disciplines of Execution* by McChesney et al and their concept of using Wildly Important Goals, or “WIGs,” to determine areas of focus for the committee. Dr. Kalahan will send a survey to members to begin the process of selecting WIGs. One member questioned whether this process will take time from solving the short-term problems in front of us, given that we only meet once/month. Dr. Kalahan felt that that work was not mutually exclusive, and this process will help clarify committee work for the long-term. It is a process of focusing on less so we can do more. She also discussed the concept of leverage as defined as the way to attack a problem by first attempting distance and objectivity. What are the actions most likely to get you to your goal? How do we bring about behavior change? This process is about effectiveness. Change won’t happen overnight.

Next step is to complete the homework: identify 3-5 goals you consider top priority. Sketch out 1-2 objectives or lead measures per goal. Provide a timeline. Dr. Kalahan will follow up with an anonymous form that will aggregate responses. From there we will work on WIGs and leads.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.