

**New Hope-Solebury Equity Committee
Meeting Minutes March 28, 2023**

Dr Lentz called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. There were approximately 17 participants in-person and on zoom.

Minutes from the Jan and Feb meetings were approved with Liz Sheehan making the motion and Sarah O'Hara seconding.

Programming

Ms. Bell reported on Autism Awareness Month programming, including a support Tshirt that faculty and staff can wear on Fridays. A parent shared that the commonly used puzzle piece logo is becoming outdated and is increasingly considered offensive to people with autism. The committee thanked the parent for the information and will revisit the use of the logo going forward. Next year there will be a tshirt design contest with students. Ms Bell also shared information on Buddy PE, a co-taught class; the Unified Bocce team success; Sole Buddies peer groups; and Buddy Crafts, the new class being taught next year to produce products for the school store.

Dr Lentz reported on a repeat of the Peace Center program "Love is the Answer," which will be held in partnership with Rabbi Diana Miller from Kelihat HaNahar and Rev. Ruk from St Phillips, as well as the Solebury police dept. Date TBD.

Curriculum/building updates

Mrs. Miller reported on LES/UES updates. They are continuing with their monthly equity themes, team building activities, and ongoing language instruction.

Ms. Halsey for the MS: recent activity in response to the recent Holocaust speaker. Advisory groups listened to poems written by a child – the Butterfly – represented strength in numbers standing up against hate. She also reported new "safe space" placards that faculty can take for their rooms: many participated.

HS – Ms. O'Hara – they are 5 weeks into the NPFH project on microaggressions and bias – students designed lesson plans around ADL videos to share through core classes. Great conversations are happening, good feedback from faculty and staff. Dr Benolken shared that there was upcoming professional development for teachers in guiding these conversations, as they have asked for more support. Mr Achenbach commented that teachers needed more guidance on how to facilitate and how much to engage vs let students lead.

Goals reports—

Ms. O'Hara reported on Cultural Heritage Night – was a great success & a huge team effort. 20+ cultures represented, 200+ attendees, big mix of ages. Thanks to Model UN, facilities, Mr. Nord, Ms O'Hara, students. Mr Achenbach suggested having at least 2 people per table so the hosts can circulate and have help with the crowds. Also suggested having the music program every ½ hour or so, it was popular.

Mr. Barth reported on Challenge Day – great success. More data to be shared in April Curriculum meeting. There were 92 participants, 80% of 7th grade. Early reports were that great connections were made, very important for this cohort because of Covid. Pre/post survey question "I am aware of what life is like for my classmates" went from 22 to 66%. One parent at the meeting commented that her kids

did not find the program valuable and misunderstood that it was more of a field day – but the administration said they have otherwise only heard positive feedback.

Humans of New Hope – Mr Giorgi – the interest is there, but the time is not!

GSA in the MS – Mr Barth reported that he had met with the high school GSA and they are going to the MS to have conversations with interested kids. Starting as ally group.

Dr Lentz reported on **county equity connections** – there are currently only 4 districts in the area still doing DEI work. Ultimate goal is a student forum before the end of the year. Currently talking to Centennial, great connection.

Question from a member – how do we safeguard our work here when other districts have dissolved equity groups etc?

- We have made it foundational
- Embedded in culture – players may change but work goes on
- This work is for everyone, not just students of color
- New state guidelines in culturally relevant standards will help – all districts have to have these competencies in place next year. Dr Benolken will share more in a future meeting. We will be an example for the state/BCIU member districts.
- Keep NHSD as gold standard in DEI work – with a solid reputation it will be harder to do away with progress.

Dr Lentz thanked the committee, faculty and staff for all their accomplishments this year. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM. Next meeting April 25 at 4:00 PM.