



APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON JUNE 13, 2017

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
DIVERSITY & EQUITY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Ira Allen Board Room
June 6, 2017
7 PM**

Attending Board Members: Stephanie Seguino, Susanmarie Harrington, Kat Kleman

Other Board: Jeff Wick

Administration: Superintendent Yaw Obeng, Hunt Assistant Principal Mattie Scheidt, Hunt Middle School Principal Len Phelan

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda:
 - A. *Agenda was approved by consensus, with suspension data reporting moved up in the agenda for the convenience of guest presenters.*
3. Public Comment:
 - A. Comments and Questions from the Public: None
4. Demographic Balance in Schools and Plans for Addressing any Differences (Superintendent Obeng)

Superintendent Obeng noted that next year there will be a bus route transporting students from north to south in order to make it possible for students to get from one end of town to a school at the other end of town (currently there is only a bus going from south to north; next year travel in both directions will be possible). This should have an impact on shifting demographics within school assignments.

5. May Suspension Data Report (Superintendent Obeng)

Overall, suspensions are reduced from last year, although disparities still remain. Superintendent Obeng invited administrators from Hunt Middle School to discuss some of the steps they have taken. School data often reveals more context and the district will be moving to a more nuanced data collecting/reporting system next year.

At Hunt, disciplinary referrals have gone down through the year. Restorative practices (led by Mattie Scheidt) have had a big impact. Teamwork by guidance, principal/assistant principal, added 0.5 social worker, use of second step (which helps students learn to make better decisions about self-care and relationships; it's used in elementary schools in the district and was brought into HMS; creation of home room and extended home room. Starting the day with breakfast in small groups for homeroom is a good thing. To date, overall reduction in disciplinary referrals of 36% and reduction in suspensions of 40% from last year to this year.

253/400 HMS students had 0 behavioral referrals. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the HMS student body has 0 or 1 behavioral referrals. A small number of students have 6+ referrals.

Next year, the SWIS system (a tracking system used with PBIS) will help track information in ways that will be more useful. Important to use this information in a proactive and helpful way, to provide support for teachers and students. Restorative practices help keep students in school where they are supported in addressing their challenges. Administrators want to keep the students in school, engaged with their community. One challenge is that staffing prevents teachers being involved in the restorative practice. With only one planning person it can be difficult to get teachers involved in the restorative practice (their building sub has been working on getting interns to assist with this).

Three HMS staff members have gone to all trauma training offered by NFI. They want more! It would be nice for NFI to come to staff meetings monthly to do case studies, or to provide consulting. Staff want more follow-up. Initial thought was that we could create a train-the-trainer model. Mattie Scheidt said that more consulting would be even more effective. Len Phelan noted that they were rolling out more tiered instruction across the board (focusing more support on tier 2 students, those not on IEP); this has reduced some behaviors that would be born of frustration.

One challenge: there is no walkable access to mental health services in the New North End. Students who have to take a bus downtown to access services are missing instructional time. HMS is making increased use of in-school resources that can bill to Medicaid (so no increased cost to district). But in-school services can still be disruptive.

The committee offered its thanks to Mattie and Len for their excellent work.

6. Discussion of Topics for Community Forums on D & E Issues

Community forums are an important part of board work. What questions and topics do we want to put on the table? Superintendent Obeng noted there are several types of community forum: to inform (presentation of information to the audience), to consult (getting input on a particular proposal), to engage (gathering the community to help build something). Discussion of the need to be clear about why we are doing forums. Also need to be clear about how we structure the forums. We could make use of Michael Healy's expertise in order to come to common agreement about why we are doing community engagement.

- Special education or student support services
- Restorative practices and trauma
- Culturally-relevant curriculum
- Open forum on a range of topics
- New American families

Discussion of the need to do informing forums that would give people more information about emerging practices.

We could do a D&E forum, carousel style, with multiple stations so people could learn about the many issues the district is dealing with.

Committee priorities: The committee determined that among the topics proposed, the two top priorities are special education (which may be broadened to student support services) and New American families. RP/trauma was next. The reason for prioritizing the special education and new American topics is due to the benefits of connecting with groups of people we need to hear more from. We also need programs to help people learn about our schools. For follow up: we need to plan what these meetings are in more detail (doing legwork about where, when, how to invite people). We will report to the full board at our June 13 meeting, and at the board retreat we will identify strategies for the planned fora.

7. Adjournment

A. Meeting adjourned by consensus at 8:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Susanmarie Harrington