



**NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD**

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
DIVERSITY & EQUITY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
Ira Allen Board Room  
May 10, 2017  
7 PM**

Attending Board Members: Stephanie Seguino, Lauren Berrizbeitia, Jeff Wick, Kat Kleman

Other Board:

Administration:

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda:
  - A. *Motion to approve agenda*
3. Public Comment:
  - A. Comments and Questions from the Public
    - Jocelyn Scheuch a BHS teacher, brought up the anti-bias curriculum that they are trying to implement at BHS. There is a growing group of parents and students who are expressing discomfort and disagreement with it. How can parents and students express their discomfort and be heard without attacking teachers? Do we have a process for this? How can the Board support teachers?
  - B. Board Reflection- (agenda changed to allow discussion of the issues above )
4. How Board Can Support Equity Work?
  - Can we cooperate with Parents and Youth for Change on planning some community forums? An example would be a forum on why we need and embrace a culturally inclusive curriculum. How would we encourage parents and youth who are resisting or disagree with this curriculum to participate?
  - The anti-bias/inclusive curriculum is embedded in many classes and the district is moving toward embedding it in all classes. There is increasing pushback on teachers as they do this work and teachers need our support.
  - Commissioner Seguino - It is the job of teachers to manage these classroom situations but is extremely difficult, needs skill training and support. What can the Board do to help?

- Superintendent Obeng - In his former school district they wrote a letter explaining the direction from the district to develop culturally inclusive curriculum and why. Teachers could use this to explain that this is a mandate from the district.
  - Commissioner Obeng will direct his equity team to draft a letter explaining what the culturally inclusive curriculum is and why it is important. Administrators and teachers will have input into whether the letter responds to their concerns. This will be ready for the beginning of next school year.
5. Discussion of Timing and Future of Equity and Inclusion Report Card
- Commissioner Seguino explained that under the last superintendent a committee was formed to make a yearly equity and inclusion report. That was prepared yearly and brought to the Board.
  - Superintendent Obeng informed the committee that we are now synchronized and in a cycle that will allow a yearly report in October. Maybe it will be under Ends Policy or perhaps under the student monitoring-not sure.
6. Suspension Report, Discussion, Admin Presentation
- Because the Board has been asking for more detail the superintendent has prepared an in-depth look at BHS suspension data and changes since last year for us.
  - Principal Tracy Racicot and Vice Principal Noel Green presented BHS progress and projects. BHS suspensions this year are about ½ the number of last year's suspensions.
  - Principal and /or Vice Principal are meeting and greeting students in the morning as they enter in an effort to create a connected community.
  - Staff is being trained in the Support Center to handle situations by other means than suspensions. They are working to develop a rapid response team and developing restorative practices.
- A. April Suspension Report
- Disparities are still existing and of great concern.
  - Suspensions have been significantly reduced since last April.
  - Principal Racicot expressed that it is still difficult to easily access all the data they need as to where and why suspensions occur, but they are working on improving the system. The information detail can be found but not easily.
7. Committee Discussion on Ends Policies Related to D & E in the context of Board Ends Policies
- Commissioner Jeff Wick's revision of the proposed ends policy statement was read by Commissioner Seguino..
  - Discussion of whether D &E goals should be included in a compact ends policy or should be a separate item.
  - Commissioner Seguino was concerned that we make our ends policies regarding diversity and equity be as clear as possible. In the the future if we have a different superintendent

- we want enough specificity that future Boards can evaluate them effectively and note progress on goals..
- Commissioner Seguino stated that there are lots of ways for students to reach their full potential. Hiring teachers of color has been shown to improve learning for children. A diverse workforce is of benefit to all.
- Commissioner Seguino's three concerns she would like to see reflected in either the ends statement or means: 1. Hiring a workforce that reflects our student population 2. Addressing the achievement gap. 3. A restorative approach to discipline.

8. Adjournment

*A. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously at 8:35 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted by Lauren Berrizbeitia