

# Racial Equity Initiative Advisory Committee

## Report Out to the Board: January 09, 2019

Hello BOE Members and Superintendent Rice. REIAC met last night so this is just a quick summary of what we covered that will be followed by an official report.

### Systemic Racism

The District requested that we review their definition of System Racism, that was created by the first Cultural Proficiency Cohort. Their intent was to define what Systemic Racism means in the New Paltz Central School District.

Our first round of review was concentrating on the parts of the definition that missed the mark. Then we moved on to questions like: in what context was this definition created, for what use, specifically by whom, why come up with our own definition, did any of these members participate in Undoing Racism, who facilitated?

After some discussion, we concluded that instead of redefining Systemic Racism, the Cohort should use an established and accepted definition, and work from there to connect how the systemic racism shows itself within our district. We recommend using the definition available from the Aspen Institute, or the Undoing Racism workshop.

Examples could be, sharing the racial/ethnic breakdown of the student body compared to that of teachers, and show the high level of disproportionality. Show the pass data on how students of color had higher rates of suspension. Look at the manifestations of Systemic Racism as identified by the Education Department, and the US Government Accountability Office.

### Incident Reporting and Incident Response Protocols

Next, we reviewed the "Protocols for Responding to a Hateful Act, Act of Bias, and/or Possible Hate Crime". These district protocols were shared with the Sisters of Sojourner's Truth, who kindly contributed their feedback and passed their working document to REIAC. The document read as if it addressed a certain type of event --the racist graffiti event--and the protocols as written aren't flexible enough to accommodate for different levels of severity which in turn requires different responses. We discussed the possibility of creating a flow chart that allows for different responses which would trigger different "Crisis Teams" to be activated as needed.

The committee was split on how to proceed with these protocols. Some felt that that the granular work should be done by staff, following readily available best practices. Some of the committee felt that considering recent events, this needed our close attention and energy. A subcommittee has been established to take this on and within that, we will decide how specific our recommendations will be, with a focus on creating policy--not only protocols.

Hand in hand with creating protocols is the incident reporting piece, which was discussed at our previous meeting. We provided sources for Anonymous Online Reporting and some other related recommendations. We discussed how the 2016-17 Incident Reporting Data reported to NY State Edu

doesn't show any incidents. Which goes back to the need to understand exactly how incidents are reported, evaluated, tracked, and eventually reported to the state to avoid discrepancies.

## Hiring and Recruitment

We are working on a new hiring and recruitment policy but didn't get to discuss our draft at this meeting. It is in the works.

## Accomplishments

We would like to thank the BOE and Superintendent Rice for adopting the following REIAC recommendations:

- Hiring for Racial Equity was added to the District's Action Plan for Racial Equity, as recommended in the Culturally Proficiency book.
- Adopting the use of an Interview Committee that consist of a diverse group of Staff, Students, and Parents for high level Administrative positions of Principal, and Assistant Principal. Shared decision making is important and of value to the New Paltz School community.

## Outstanding Items

There is still some information that REIAC requires:

- **Incident Reporting Example** - Graffiti incident reporting from beginning to end - REIAC has requested a full reporting of this incident that occurred at Lenape during the Spring of the 2017-2018 school year. We would like to know how this incident was handled from the time of the initial report, through communication to staff and families, to any consequences that were implemented. This could be a confidential report to REIAC for the purposes of understanding current protocols. REIAC plans on reviewing existing protocols and making recommendations for possible changes.
- **Committee Membership** - Reopening application to the REIAC. This means that the application process would be open to teachers and administrators. There are two spots for teachers and two for administrators. We cannot stress enough the importance of having teachers and admin staff at these discussions. We understand that with school and recent admin changes this can be rough, but it is worth it.
- **Invitation** - REIAC would like to invite the new administrators in the district to come and meet our committee to help them better understand what we are doing and to be able to connect with new administration.
- **Bias Awareness Curriculum Project** - We are aware that there was a "Summer 2018 Bias Awareness Curriculum Project", conducted by teachers in each school. We would like a chance to meet with this group to hear their findings and provide feedback from a parent/student perspective. How do we get in touch with them?
- **Racial Equity Action Plan Milestones** - To align the work of the committee with the work of the district, it would be helpful to see milestones for the Action Plan.
- **Climate Survey** - Can the REIAC review the Climate Survey that was administered at the High School?