

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Notes

Date: 10/22/2020

Notes Submitted by Diane Marsolini

Time: 6:30-8:15 PM

Location: Zoom (Link sent separate)

Attendees: Andy Corey, Diane Marsolini, Catie Parikh, Marie Ramas MD, Andrew Scott, Gerrell Smith, Tiffany Testa, David Werner

### Agenda:

1. Welcome: Connections
2. Story Sharing: Gerrell and Kylie
3. Group Norms
  - a. Break out rooms (pairs)
  - b. Whole Group
  - c. Consensus Vote
4. Feedback on Resolution
  - a. Warm and Cool feedback
  - b. Discussion Points
  - c. Next Steps
5. Next Meeting Logistics: Upcoming Agenda Items, Date
6. Closing: Connections

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### 1. Connections:

Member Werner restated his concern that under RSA 91-A these meetings should be held in public

Andy Corey referenced a few times, typically in grades 7 – 10, when individual kids have drawn swastikas in various places in the school. The response from the students and faculty vary, with some being offended, others using it as a teachable moment coinciding with curriculum, and others not sure how best to manage it from a Social Emotional Learning perspective. The group was asked to provide any observations or points they would like to discuss.

Gerrell referenced an experience when he was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade in Los Angeles and his community was in the process of integrating the predominantly white and black communities. A swastika was put on a gas station. Although he didn't fully understand the symbol, it resulted in an unsafe feeling in that area.

Andy stated the schools typically deal with these situations with the individuals involved unless there is a more persistent issue.

Last year, an email was sent out by Rick Barnes, the HBHS Principal, regarding an incident involving swastikas in the rest rooms. The email referenced the need to start conversations, which is logistically difficult at the high school level, where there are no specific class times for these types of discussions to occur.

Caitie discussed how swastikas are a symbol of prosperity in the Hinduism. This can add to confusion regarding the symbol as well.

Providing context for kids is important so that students do not make up their own stories on their own or with friends on social media.

The concern was brought up about spreading ideas that can result in a negative response in the community, such as the potential for suicide incidence to increase when suicide is discussed. Tiffany stated the research does not support this claim and she will send the research references to the group.

Andy mentioned how social media has escalated all issues for kids since they no longer have that safe time away from comments from friends.

David wondered what gain there could be for kids in our schools to draw swastikas in our community.

Marie commented that it may be better to dig deeper for answers so that we are able to be more proactive rather than reactive.

## 2. Introduction – Gerrell

Gerrell is originally from LA and he wanted to join this group because it was focusing on inclusion of all kids, with a broad focus.

## 3. Group Norms

There was agreement among the group that the proposed group norms were good. The suggestion was to assume everyone has something important to say. We should assume good intentions and be able to discuss any impacts, such as taking offense.

The document will be a living document and may be updated as we continue to learn how best to communicate. We can use the “ouches and oops” approach, where if you are offended by a remark, you can say “ouch” and the person making the statement “oops”.

## 4. Feedback on Resolution

Andy described the importance of this document since it had been brought to the School Boards and they are looking for input. The document does not have to be in the form of a resolution. It is not a policy or mandate. The overall goal of this committee is to assist in determining what a HBHS graduate should look like and how we will get there as well as to help determine changes that can be made to ensure all voices are heard.

Andy would like to bring back to the School Boards:

- Resolution or statement, including definitions and detail for clarity.
- The expected roll of the DEI Committee
- The DEI Committee Norms

Feedback was provided as “warm” meaning you personally connected to the statement/idea or “cool” meaning you disagree or feel clarification is needed.

<b>Warm</b>	<b>Cool</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It defines that it will become part of the strategic efforts.</li> <li>2. It states diversity, equity and inclusion affects all members of the HB Community.</li> <li>3. The updated version considered input from the community heard during school board meetings.</li> <li>4. It states commitment to nondiscrimination, sending the message from the school boards to the students.</li> <li>5. Including the impact of COVID-19 is important (examples; some kids are thriving in remote learning who had a difficult time with traditional schooling; home schooled kids are not considered different than others in the community.)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Important to define terms clearly, ensuring clarity of who the resolution serves (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, viewpoint diversity, etc.)</li> <li>2. Better define point #2 of the resolution so it is clear to the School Boards and the community what is included.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Address the community concern about the use of an outside consultant.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Consider a different format than the current resolution.</li> </ol>

Closing:

The process for moving forward was discussed with Andy suggesting break out sessions and assignments. Tiffany stated separating the team changes the dynamic and suggests continuing as a team rather than in break out teams.

Action Items:

1. Review and think about the points made about the resolution. Suggest mission, vision, and goals. Provide additional feedback via email by Monday.
2. Consider decision making process for this group.
3. Consider definitions to be included in the resolution.

## Norms for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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Adapted by SF-CESS from Singleton, (2005). *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

**Stay Engaged and Put Relationships First.** "To stay engaged is a refusal to let your heart and mind "check out of the conversation while leaving your body in place. It is a personal commitment each person makes, regardless of the engagement of others. It means remaining morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the dialogue" (Singleton, G., Linton, C., 2005). Work to build community and trust with full engagement and awareness of power dynamics.

**Create a Space for Multiple Truths and Norms and look for learning.** "To speak your truth, you must be willing to take risks and be absolutely honest about your thoughts, feelings and opinions and not just saying what you perceive others want to hear. Until we can become completely honest, the dialogue will remain limited and ultimately ineffective" (Singleton, G. & Linton, C., 2005). In addition, seek understanding of truths that differ from yours, with awareness of power dynamics. Show what you are learning and not just what you know. We must distinguish between our "truths" being beliefs, values and opinions and evidence based truths recognizing that all perspectives are not equally valid.

**Lean into Discomfort.** To deal with the reality of diversity, equity and inclusion in an honest and forthright way, we ask participants to agree to experience the discomfort that is to be expected due to the sensitivity of the subject. Be kind and be brave in your conversation by being explicit with your language around race, class, gender, sexual orientation etc...

**Expect and Accept Non-Closure.** To engage in conversations and work around diversity, equity and inclusion, is to recognize that you/we will not reach closure in all of our understandings. There is no "quick fix" or solution to the challenge of our inequity struggles as individuals, or as a society. Therefore, we must commit to an ongoing dialogue as an essential component of our action plan.

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**Pay Attention to Patterns of Participation.** To model the equitable engagement strategies needed in and for our schools, we must recognize and interrupt communication and behavior patterns that stem from and reinforce the unequal power dynamics of dominant culture. This work is more complex than making certain everyone has an equal opportunity to engage all the time. This norm requires us to maintain an inquiry lens, constantly making meaning of the dynamics between individuals, the content, and the goals – in the moment and over time.

**Contextual Confidentiality.** To support each other to take risks and tell our truths for the benefit of our own and community transformation, we need to agree (and we need to develop trust) to respect the privacy of each individual's identity and life experiences, while finding ways to talk publicly about our learning as a result of our shared work. In other words, we keep each other's names and stories "in the

room" and own our personal learning and shifts in beliefs.

**Go to The Source (Or Let It Go).** The 24 (or 36 or 72) Hour Rule - To further accept and normalize professional conflict as part of this work, we need agreements about how to address and move past these conflicts. As a base, when we experience a conflict with another in our community, we agree that we will inform them of our conflict within an agreed upon amount of time (even if working through the conflict may take longer) or we agree to move past the conflict, accepting it as a part of our work.