

Superintendent's Committee

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Zoom 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Join Zoom

Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/99164187536?pwd=OXdkS044K0dEYU95bTJpQUFJcGVJdz09>

Meeting ID: 991 6418 7536

Passcode: VZe7s8

All Times are estimates and subject to change without notice

6:30 Call to Order

6:35 Approval of Minutes

December 17, 2020

December 3, 2020

November 5, 2020

October 22, 2020

October 8, 2020

6:45 The Superintendent's committee for diversity, equity and inclusion will discuss:

- Draft resolution and the input we received from our public input session which occurred during our last Zoom meeting

8:00 Meeting adjourns

Superintendent's DEI Committee Meeting  
December 17, 2017  
Zoom meeting

## **Draft Minutes**

### Committee Members in Attendance

Dave Werner, Tiffany Testa, Marie Ramas, Gerrell Smith, Andrew Scott, Caitie Parikh, Diane Marsolini, Superintendent Corey

Call to Order – 6:30

Motion to approve minutes - Superintendent Corey reminded the group that we needed a motion and a second to put the motion on the table. Member Ramas moved and Member Smith seconded the minutes. Member Smith clarified that he did not believe that competition was essential for students and athletes and wanted that correction made to the December 3rd minutes. No other alteration/corrections were provided. Member Werner expressed his concerns regarding the minutes from the previous meeting not being available. He understood the formatting issues but felt strongly we should not be adopting these minutes without the others. He formally objected to the process and felt that tonight's minutes were contingent on the others. He cited RSA 91A and informed the Committee that we have many laws and policies on the books that address DEI. He informed the group about the Governor's commission and stated that he believed we were trying to solve a problem that didn't exist. He stated he felt that Robert's rules were not being followed. Member Ramas stated that she did not feel that Robert's Rules were being correctly applied. Superintendent Corey informed Member Werner that his objection would be noted. The Committee voted 7-0-1 (Member Werner abstaining) to approve the minutes.

Member Smith informs the Committee that he has a conflict regarding another meeting and will be leaving the zoom call shortly. Member Smith states that he is trying to create the best environment for kids and then apologizes for having to leave at 6:46.

Member Tests shares her screen and reviews the agenda and the group norms. Superintendent Corey reminds the committee that Principal Barnes is working with a group of students and will be invited to a future meeting to provide input to the committee.

Member Testa informs the Committee and members of the public that she and Member Scott will be working together to gather the public input. Member Scott informs the group that everyone will be given an opportunity to speak. He asks that community members keep their statements short and that he will give them a reminder when their time is winding down. Member Testa informs the group she will be unmuting people and if they do not wish to speak they can pass. Superintendent Corey reminds members of the public that they need to state their name and address for the minutes. Member Testa informs everyone that she will simply go through the list of participants as she sees them on the screen.

Public Input

Anna Birch 16 Broad Street, Hollis - Thank you to the committee for working on this document. She is comforted making this a part of the strategic priority. School is leading on this and supports DEI being included in the strategic plan.

Brooke Arthur, Hollis - Brooke is in support of the document, she has been following the committee and is in awe of the work. She feels the dialogue is a model for our students and is interested in next steps.

Beth Gilday, 22 Ames Road, Brookline - Beth stated she approved the highlighted changes to the document

Aaron Penkacik, 133 Dow Rd, Hollis - The graphic in the document is unclear and open to several interpretations and should be removed. It is also much less precise than clear text that would make the point unambiguously. One interpretation could be that all of the bikes in "Equality" are the same which disadvantages all but the woman second from the right. The intent of the DEI policy should be that all students receive equal opportunity, which the top of the graphic could be viewed as representing. The bikes in "Equity" are all different and, though all cyclists are efficiently cycling, the outcome in terms of cycling performance would vary by individual. That's not equity. Equity would be that all of the cyclists have equal outcomes in terms of cycling performance. The graphic also fails to capture the concept that equity requires taking from one person to give to another in order to achieve equity. We should not change the definition of equity as used in this context. Here it means that everyone has the same outcome regardless of ability or effort. That is fundamentally wrong because it means taking from one individual who has earned it and giving it to another who has not earned it. Alternatively, equality in this context means that everyone is provided with the same opportunities to excel and can do with them what they desire or are capable of achieving. It is good to provide certain students with special needs who should receive the help that they deserve. We should be trying to equalize opportunities, not outcomes. Aaron's zoom connection created issues at times and Superintendent Corey instructed Aaron to email his comments.

Joe Garruba - 28 Winchester Drive, Hollis -

Removing the reference to SB263 I think the language referencing SB 263 should be removed. State RSA gets revised and changed continuously. For 2020 SB 263 will be reassigned to a different bill. In addition, the language of RSA 193 may be changed in the future. I think what we are trying to do here is outline the concepts with which our district will operate. It is a given that we will follow the law. In our equity section of the resolution we say almost exactly the same thing as the language of SB263. We state "We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, etc...The repetition adds confusion. For these reasons I think that the referenced legal language should be removed. Removing the SB263 language will also require removing the first sentence of the following paragraph which references it. Removing the Picture I recommend removing the picture. It is a good method of starting a discussion but it does not belong in a resolution as it can be interpreted in many ways by many people. Graphics are great for presentations, and this one in particular is a great choice, but including any graphic in a written resolution runs the risk of misinterpretation at a later date. We are

here in order to make a clear statement and the picture will not mean the same thing to all people and its interpretation is not under control. I think the graphic is attempting to convey that "Hollis will take individual students' abilities into consideration and provide resources fairly so that all students can reach their full potential." and rather than leave that to interpretation I think we'd be better served including that wording explicitly. Spelling it out in words should make the graphic unnecessary.

Donna Lavasseur, 70 Depot Road, Hollis - Donna thanked the committee for their hard work. She likes the document as written but is concerned with the highlighted portion - seek equity in the education statement. Member Scott asks Donna for clarification and she replies she does not believe the highlight should be included as it is someone's opinion and does not belong in the resolution.

Heather Neibel 13 Milton Place, Hollis - Heather thanks the committee for their efforts. States as a teacher she understands this work and then states she will pass on further comment

Leslie Stokes 25 Summer Lane, Hollis - This is the first meeting Leslie has ever attended. She stated that the graphic was what made her read everything. She informed the committee that her child benefited from assistance and felt strongly that the image represented that point. Leslie stated she 100% agreed with the work and that it meant a lot to her family.

Julie Ledoux, 64 Dow Road, Hollis - Julie informed the committee why her screen name was Mama J - she often chats with children on socialist countries and privacy and screen names are monitored so she must be careful. She reminds the committee to be careful how we use the word equity. Causes constitutional concerns for her. People of power decide everything and do not want diversity used against people. Be very careful. Julie appreciates the hard work. The work is emotionally based but should be founded in the constitution. Definitions are important. Julie noted her concern about the process. Minutes are important and secrecy makes the process a concern. Process, language and law matter. Julie reminds the committee there are many laws on the books. What problem are we trying to solve? Concludes by stating she likes the words the committee has arrived at.

Mark Ledoux, 64 Dow Road, Hollis - Mark congratulates the committee on attempting to capture the spirit of the community especially with DEI a focal point in the workforce and in schools. Mark informed the committee that he has been a pilot for thirty years and verbiage we use is important because there are certain truths. He uses an example of telling a young child not to touch a hot stove to solidify his point regarding truth. He states that the entire community has to support this work, not just one group. He feels less is more and would appreciate the committee scrubbing the document again.

Member Scott asked for clarification on verbiage and certain truth related to the document. Mark clarifies that he was talking about language in our group norms.

Melanie Levesque - 2 McDaniels drive, Brookline - Melanie thanks the committee for their work, states it is important for our children to see us doing this work. He informs the committee that her daughter graduated from HBHS as a person of color. The statement is important. She

has liked how we have listened as a committee. She used our discussion regarding competition to emphasize her point on including that reference. She looked forward to moving the document to the Board and understood that the Board could choose to remove or add items to the document. She stated she was proud of the work and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Mark Longtin - 60 Dow Road, Hollis - Mark informed the committee that he runs a non-profit and appreciated our efforts. He wanted to raise two points. He believed that the highlighted portion needed to be removed as it potentially took academic freedom away from our teachers. He wanted to reduce the mandate in the resolution. Mark also stated he was concerned about funding. If we choose outside consultants that would potentially become too expensive and take away resources from students.

Michelle St. John - Thanks to the committee for the great work so far. Michelle is in support of the graphic - provides context for visual people. She is in favor of the highlighted area. She felt it was fully honest and challenged the committee to not be burdensome to the teachers, but acknowledged history and diversity and what people bring to the table. She then stated a quote from recently deceased republican politician Bill Bullard is this: Opinion is really the lowest form of human knowledge. It requires no accountability, no understanding. The highest form of knowledge is empathy, for it requires us to suspend our egos and live in another's world. It requires a profound purpose larger than the self-kind of understanding.

Member Testa calls on two attendees whose screen names had only first names. Neither person responded to her request for public input so member Scott returned to Joe Garruba to continue his points.

Joe Garruba, 28 Winchester Drive, Hollis - Lack of affirmation of the student's freedom of speech. The language of this resolution does not clearly affirm the first amendment rights of students. I think this is important since I do not want this concept of the resolution to harm students' ability to express themselves. For example if a student's nickname is stretch or shorty or lefty is that discrimination? Would a student be prevented from using those terms? They are just observations of physical characteristics yet all of those categories are covered in our diversity resolution. If a student objects to those names would that be considered discrimination and subject to discipline? I think the resolution needs to affirm student's first amendment rights. How about if a student were to wear a Cavalier for Halloween and a student who was born in England was offended because the term Cavalier is associated with royalist supporters in the English Civil war. Our resolution would seem to define this as discrimination on the basis of national origin. Would the costume be permitted? Shouldn't we affirm that this resolution is not intended to limit the first amendment rights of our students? Hollis Brookline schools value the concept of free speech and the first amendment rights of the constitution since we feel that freedom of expression is critical to providing a quality education. Definition of diversity I'm concerned that the resolution speaks of a list of types of diversity, but I feel that the list should extend the concept of diversity to honoring all students equally instead of enumerating a list of students with special status. I recommend adding the words we commit to honoring diversity, which is expressed in many forms by all students in Hollis.

At 7:47 Member Scott ends public input by thanking everyone for attending and participating. Member Testa shares the document with the committee. Member Testa reminds the committee our focus was on the highlighted area and that we had reached consensus on the majority of the document.

Member Scott stated that he believed based on public input that the highlighted statement should be out. Member Parikh stated that she felt the highlight was limiting and thus agreed with removing it. Member Marsolini stated that she agreed the highlight could come out. Member Ramas echoed the statements of other committee members and supported the removal of the highlighted area. Member Werner stated he had done a ton of research - RSA 193 - mandates an adequate education for all students- since he felt it was already mandated then the statement was redundant.

Member Testa does not support the highlighted area because it is an action or an ask and didn't feel that was the committee's role. She stated the highlighted section was work that would be done when the curriculum was reviewed. That work was not for our committee and she supported removal of the highlighted section. Member Testa then followed up with Member Werner asking if he wanted the highlighted area out. Member Werner stated he had no support of any of this. He had raised many points about the document. He stated he had expressed concerns about the proceedings from the beginning. He had concerns about DEI and when he raised it he was told "ouch" by committee members. He is not in support of everything and does not feel he has been heard. Member Werner stated he felt his research was disregarded. Member Werner stated he had reviewed school policies and wanted Superintendent Corey to know what we have in place covers it brilliantly and succinctly. We have a policy for 193E; we have a curriculum on DEI, policies for students with different talents. Member Werner informed the committee that our special education policies cited both state and federal statutes. He touched upon RSA 186, mentioned administrative code 1100 and federal laws that dealt with discrimination. He again informed the committee that the Governor had a commission on DEI at the State level. He does not know why we want to change everything. He believes we should have consulted policies before working on resolution. He stated that SAU 41 policies are excellent. They are well thought out. They pull together Federal, State and administrative codes. They are good policies, the best he has seen during his lengthy career as an attorney. Member Werner stated he had reached out to the Governor and that he had spoken to someone at the state and wanted us to wait and see what the state was doing. Member Ramas mentioned that in her faith they have a process known as the pruning process. The goal of the pruning process is to always be trying to improve. She stated that the document was an affirmation of the district trying to get better. She referred to it as self-reflection for the community. She stated the process makes us better to compete in the real world. Member Werner thanked Member Ramas and informed the committee he is only trying to do his best from his vantage point. Member Scott thought the committee should circle back on January 7th and again review the document based on input from tonight's comment period. Superintendent Corey stated he will try to incorporate specific comments into the document which may help facilitate our discussion. Member Scott stated that our work has been all about having difficult conversations. These conversations need to happen. Frustration and tension have value and Member Scott appreciated Dave's input and experience as a lawyer. Member Scott also recognized that Dave's comments on SAU 41 policies were very complimentary. There is great

value in what we are doing here and having the ability to agree to disagree will result in a document that most in the community can really support. Members Testa, Parikh, and Marsolini spoke in support of member Scotts statements. Member Testa stated she was proud of our work and thanked everyone for providing their voice to the discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22.

Superintendent's Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Meeting date: December 3, 2020

Zoom Meeting 6:30-8:15

**DRAFT MINUTES for REVIEW**

Approximately 40 members of the public observed the meeting and submitted comment via the chat function

In Attendance: Superintendent Corey, Member Tiffany Testa, Member Ramos, Member Smith, Member Werner, Member Scott, Member Marsolini, Member Parikh

The meeting was started at 6:30 with Member Testa asking committee members to share something that brought them Joy since our last meeting. Committee members spoke about Christmas lights, lunch duty, family being home for Thanksgiving, their child selecting their college, their children making up songs, the ability to start exercising again, and a gift they had received from their spouse

Committee Member Testa then screen shared the agenda and reviewed our objectives for the meeting. Member Testa also shared the process that the committee had used to arrive at tonight's meeting. Group norms were reviewed and member Smith commented on how well he felt the norms were working.

Superintendent Corey shared a discussion he had recently had with students at lunches. The students had shared their thoughts regarding the topic of inclusion and how they felt specifically that the high school had clubs, teams, organizations and classes that allowed students to be included if they were so inclined.

Committee member Testa then shared the draft work the committee had completed at their last meeting. Draft definitions and work on the resolution was screen shared for all to review. Committee member Testa informed the group that member Scott had completed a revision of the draft, where the definitions and the draft resolution were combined, for the committee to review and comment on. Superintendent Corey suggested that member Scott walk the committee through his draft of the resolution. Member Scott completed the review (see draft attached) and member Ramos then conducted a round table discussion so that all members of the committee could provide input.

Member Parikh wondered about the scope of the legislation that was included in the draft while also commenting that she felt that the "accurate history" component was a positive addition.

Member Marsolini commented that she liked the law at the beginning as it provided context to the work and also supported the addition of the American history component.

Member Werner thought the addition of the statue was brilliant and expressed his opinion that the legal basis was important because that brings us back to the constitution and the need for accurate history. Dave shared his concern about equity and wanted the group to understand that a student needs to overcome obstacles, don't treat a student as disabled they want to compete. Dave shared a personal story about his eyesight as a young student and how he overcame that obstacle. Dave doesn't want to inhibit competition, he wants students to compete at the highest level and be rewarded for their effort. Dave spoke about his competition on the football field and throughout his academic and professional career. Dave stressed he wants everyone to have a level playing field.

Member Smith stated he had a very positive response to the draft resolution and felt that we should state the pursuit of accurate American history. *Gerrall supported Dave's position regarding competition and believes that competition is a driving motivational piece for students and athletes.* Gerrell considered Dave's position regarding the term competition and discussed his work experiences as they relate to competition and suggested that the competition is not actually the best driving motivational force for students. The concept of supporting students as they enter a competitive world was suggested in place of the concept of students being competitive with one another, which both Dave and Gerrell supported.

Member Ramos stated that she supported many of the items already stated by other members. She felt that the engagement in these conversations was enhancing the draft resolution. Marie offered an addition to the draft that focused on a student's home environment and how those experiences must be included for schools to understand their role. Member Testa included the amendment to the resolution.

Member Testa stated she was torn between including the law or not having it. She stated she was fine either way but wanted her thoughts included. Tiffany loved the quote by a graduating senior, class of 2020, and asked if we needed permission to include in the draft. Member Werner stated we needed permission. Tiffany also liked the visual that member Scott had added but did not support the concept of competition being added to the resolution as member Werner and member Smith had suggested.

Superintendent Corey stated that he also appreciated the visual and thought that should be included. Andy supported the inclusion of the legislation and supported the using the quote by Joshua Ide (with permission). Superintendent Corey did caution that he felt that identifying American history was important but that we should seek wording that identifies the importance of all curriculums and how they potentially relate to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The committee then conducted a recap of the suggestion and identified elements that would be included into the draft document. The consensus was that the law would be included, that we incorporate the concept of supporting students as they enter a competitive world into the document, that the elements regarding a child's environment or situation impacting school are included, and that the term "medical condition" should be added to the resolution. The committee supported the concept of accurate American history but decided that the exact wording would be reviewed at the next meeting.

The committee provided some wrap up comments which focused on tolerance, the ability of this committee to have courageous conversation around a topic that is of importance to the communities. Member Werner reminded us that our common interest was the welfare of the students that we are representing by being on this committee.

Superintendent Corey informed the committee that the next meeting would be December 17th and would start at 6:30 via zoom. The Superintendent informed the committee of his inability to attend as a result of a previously scheduled public hearing for the SAU budget. The agenda and supporting documents would be posted approximately a week prior to the meeting date.

The zoom meeting concluded at 8:17.

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## Hollis-Brookline Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative

SAU41 is committed to nondiscrimination and strives to be an inclusive community. The district recognizes that issues of diversity, equity and inclusion affect all members of the Hollis-Brookline community regardless of their background.

NH Senate Bill 263 came into effect in September 2019 including:

Section 193:39 Discrimination Prevention Policy Required. Each school district and chartered public school shall develop a policy that guides the development and implementation of a coordinated plan to prevent, assess the presence of, intervene in, and respond to incidents of discrimination on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, marital status, familial status, disability, religion, national origin or any other classes protected under RSA 354-A.

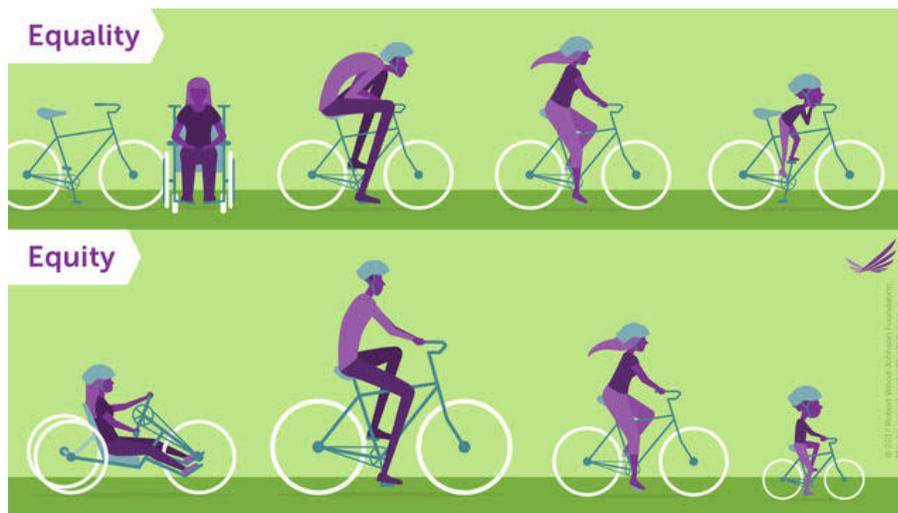
While this law is a benchmark, we are committed to create an even better environment for all students in the Hollis-Brookline community. HB Class of 2020 President, Joshua Ide, said in his graduation speech “I encourage you not just to be tolerant but seek to understand other people. It’s only then they will be willing to listen to your ideas.”

In envisioning the Hollis Brookline graduates of the future, it is the intention of the District to be explicit in the cultivation of a culture that values, respects and encourages our students to engage in difficult conversations with the goal of understanding each other and the world around them. We affirm freedom of speech, logic, reason, debate, and civil discourse and aim to graduate young adults who value those qualities and seek to be known for the content of their character.

For SAU #41, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are defined as:

**Diversity:** We commit to honoring diversity, which is expressed in many forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, physical appearance, cultural and personal experience, and political perspective. While group identity is important, we affirm the centrality of the individual student who is ultimately responsible for his or her own thoughts and actions.

**Equity:** Our vision of equity is best displayed in a visual.



Equity provides fairness in resources and opportunities so that all individual students get what they need. As a district, we seek to provide equality of opportunity to each of our students, helping them access their education in the best way possible for their individual needs and allowing our students to excel to the best of their abilities going forward to prepare to enter a competitive world. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, or weight, medical condition. Whether our students experience safe, nurturing home environments, or if they are impacted by physical, economic or developmental challenges our community recognizes that our schools can play an integral role in the facilitation of a student's experience by modeling positive interactions. We understand that creating a culture of mutual respect and value of perspectives can plant seeds of positive change in a child's life. (Added) We seek equity in education as well by teaching accurate history and curriculum, both the positive and negative aspects of American history so that our graduates have an accurate view of America.

**Inclusion:** We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our school community is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard and where every individual feels a sense of value, belonging and inclusion. We know that by creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities.

Therefore, may it be resolved that:

1. The SAU #41 school districts will make diversity, equity, and inclusion a strategic priority by actively supporting such efforts.

2. SAU #41 will review its policies and procedures relative to diversity, equity, and inclusion and release a plan to address its findings as a part of SAU #41's strategic five year plan to be developed and voted on by the school boards in 2021.

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

Date: 11/5/2020

Submitted by: Andrew Scott and 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,

Absent: Dave Werner

### Definitions Small Group

In our small group on definitions, discussion this week centered on the word 'diversity' It started with Andrew proposing we start with the University of Michigan DEI definitions as the baseline for our work:

#### **Defining diversity, equity and inclusion from University of Michigan site**

At the University of Michigan, our dedication to academic excellence for the public good is inseparable from our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. It is central to our mission as an educational institution to ensure that each member of our community has full opportunity to thrive in our environment, for we believe that diversity is key to individual flourishing, educational excellence and the advancement of knowledge.

**Diversity:** We commit to increasing diversity, which is expressed in myriad forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, and political perspective.

**Equity:** We commit to working actively to challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status.

**Inclusion:** We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our campus is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard and where every individual feels a sense of value, belonging and inclusion. We know that by creating a vibrant

climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities.

### **We started with the word Diversity**

Gerrell mentioned he joined the committee for diversity 'for all' Pointed out disability and ability...liked how both were included.

Tiffany liked definition as well, pointed out identities. Group discussed if the definition was diverse enough? We decided against ending with something like 'etc.' Tiffany also highlighted the importance of political perspectives and students being able to explore diversity of thought and different ideologies.

Caitie - appreciated definitions being short and to the point. Mentioned adding some from the PTA document. Physical appearance, lived experiences, abilities, learning styles

From these comments we took a few more identifiers from the PTA definition to end with the definition below.

**Diversity:** We commit to supporting and valuing diversity, which is expressed in myriad forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, physical appearance, lived experience, and political perspective.

### Statement Small Group

During our breakout session, Andy, Marie and I worked on updating the resolution to clarify for the Community and Boards what the resolution is requesting of the Boards. We worked off of the resolution discussed with the larger group using the “warm” and “cool” input.

The first document was our first draft. It includes a synopsis of our thoughts as we reviewed the resolution and comments. As we reviewed this document, it appeared to be moving more toward a Mission / Vision statement, which is not the role of this group. We then drafted an update that is closer to the original resolution. This document references SB263, which may not be the appropriate place for this background information but seems to be helpful information for the Community and Boards.

They are still a work in progress. We are sending to the group for our meeting tomorrow.

## Hollis-Brookline Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative

Hollis-Brookline is an inclusive community that is committed to nondiscrimination and would like to clarify this commitment by clearly illustrating the importance of reflecting the intrinsic value and respect we have for all students, regardless of their individual experiences and perspectives. We believe in educational excellence and equity for all learners.

In the spirit of the Hollis-Brookline School District mission statement, we recognize that our students come from diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives that enrich our community. By articulating and enhancing our concepts of DEI we will further help students acquire the knowledge and life skills for academic, social and emotional success, and “ensure a strong, supportive learning environment”.

While the Hollis-Brookline community benefits from highly engaged families who commit both in time and financially to the advancement of their children, we also are sensitive to the fact that providing a template for our students to understand the world around them through an equity lens will help prepare them both socially and emotionally.

Diversity and equity, while often illustrated through discussion of race, are integral in providing context to the unique needs of all our students. This includes students who are of different gender, primary language, disabilities, gifted learners, sexual orientation, religion or more.

Our aim is to best prepare model servant-leaders within our community as they embark into their next phase of learning.

Hollis-Brookline is committed to excellence and want to be intentional in creating a welcoming and nurturing environment for all. While other school districts within the state have had to develop policies regarding DEI, in response to events that developed, it is our intention to be explicit in the cultivation of a culture that values, respects and encourages our students to engage in difficult conversations. **[recall school districts with DEI policies: Dover, Exeter, Hampton, Laconia]**

In envisioning the Cavalier of the future, we hope to embrace and adapt existing frameworks from other institutions of higher learning ... **[insert example of framework]**

The District understands that throughout a student’s lifespan, there will be significant events that imprint their experiences during their pedagogy. These experiences not only effect their ability to learn, but they also can magnify existing inequities. [The current **COVID-19 pandemic** may bring unique challenges related to equity that are yet to be examined. ]

The Committee will:

1. Review and submit to the School Board's a suggested Resolution on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the SAU
2. Evaluate the current Choose Love and CASEL frameworks and give suggestions on how to incorporate these models within the SAU-41 framework, from a student/family perspective
3. Provide on-going feedback on educational programming to the SAU administration to ensure continued growth regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.
4. Suggest possible waypoints to consider in the development the educational curriculum to reflect the above frameworks.
5. Serve as an interface between the district, the Hollis Brookline schools and community members to encourage collaborative goals in student development

The District will:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**For information:**

Here is the SAU-41 Vision, Mission and strategic plan. I wonder if we can use the vision to structure our objectives/goals

**MISSION AND VISION**

The **mission** of SAU 41 is to ensure a strong, supportive learning environment focused on academic excellence.

The **vision** of SAU 41 is to help students acquire the knowledge and life skills for academic, social, and emotional success:

- The SAU 41 schools establish and fulfill standards for academic excellence that are competitive at the state, regional, national, and international levels as benchmarked against recommendations by renowned independent bodies.
- The SAU 41 schools educate students to be critical thinkers, creative problem- solvers, effective communicators, and socially responsible, engaged citizens who are college and workforce ready.
- The SAU 41 schools use data from multiple and varied assessments to improve student learning; every student makes or exceeds expected annual progress.

- The staff, services, and culture enhance student self-esteem and employ a variety of strategies to meet the academic, social, emotional, and safety needs of all students.
- The professional learning community evolves and adopts best practices for learning; administrators and staff members are supported in their work and are compensated fairly and competitively.
- The School Boards, administrators, and staff engage students, families, and the community through effective communication of priorities, plans, and progress.
- The school districts in SAU 41 are models for sound fiscal responsibility and integrity.
- Each district in SAU 41 has a comprehensive [district report card](#) that measures its performance against SMART goals

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The District recognizes that unforeseen events may arise, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, that bring unique challenges related to equity that are yet to be examined.

In envisioning the Cavalier of the future, it is the intention of the District to be explicit in the cultivation of a culture that values, respects and encourages our students to engage in difficult conversations.

For purposes of this resolution, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are defined as:

- Diversity:
- Equity:
- Inclusion:

Therefore, may it be resolved that:

1. The SAU #41 school districts will make diversity, equity, and inclusion a strategic priority by actively supporting such efforts.
2. SAU #41 will review its policies and procedures relative to diversity equity and inclusion and release a plan to address its findings including proposed actions, including but not limited to, professional development, drafting new or editing existing policies and procedures, and curriculum review.

## 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:

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-CES 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.

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

Date: 10/8/2020

Notes Submitted by Dr. Marie Ramas

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

1. Introductions- Andrew Corey, Diane Marsolini, Tiffany Testa, Marie Ramas, Andrew Scott, Gerrell Smith, Caitie Parikh, David Werner
2. Superintendent remarks: Goals of this committee is to develop strategic plan for DEI in the school → His goal is to have systems in place to allow all students to share and grow in their talents.
  - a. Does everyone have an opportunity to be their best- An Example now is that now that there are not middle school sports, but now more participation amongst the kids
  - b. Dance: He wants to explain DEI in a way that everyone can understand.
  - c. SAU- CASEL- Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning and Choose Love to address DEI issues in the school
  - d. Goal is to design a program that will embolden the
  - e. Any conversation where all participant can come to a conversation with openness and in collaboration.--> This is part of the picture of what a cavalier looks like
  - f. Working to create a DEI statement
  - g. The committee will also serve as a resource for input and longterm vision
  - h. Part of the work will go into the strategic plan, so that the recommendations can be placed in the budget
  - i. Professional development for staff—Right now we are not starting with staff
  - j. Ultimately, he would like to develop a roadmap to creating a “roadmap” for the district
- Diane asked what kind of work was already done in the last two years. → Andy states Casel is new and will send a document to the group to see
  - Choose Love is focused more on bullying, and teachers have used some concepts in readings and themes throughout the years
  - Tiiffany added that the Ass. Superintendent has used some work regarding evaluation of the CASEL for the school in teaching the teachers
    - Equity work and SEL is hand in hand with this curriculum
    - Board of Education has adopted Choose Love for SEL
- Andrew Scott- was impressed by the Choose Love program- Especially the concept of forgiveness on first impression

- Andrew Scott is interested to how this committee was chosen--> Andy Corey states that some have volunteered and some he saw as vocal surrounding the concept of DEI and he felt that

3. What's our story?- Marie- First-generation Haitian-American, Mother of three and grew up in NH. Passionate about equity and providing a platform for all people to share their stories with respect, in order to achieve their best form of wellness.

- - Andy- President of the Superintendent's Association- Passion in special Education, grew up in Lawrence, MA and educators made a difference in his life, accounting degree, white-Irish Catholic family, father was supervisor of the Lawrence welfare department, learned very young that DEI is important to him. When he was a teacher in private highschool created a pipeline program to bring innercity kids
- Diane- has two children who are adopted- one from Korea another African American→ She sees things through the lens of a parent
- Caitie- grew up in Northern, VT- poor and rural, was never taught about diversity and race. She felt that she was not sure how associate with people of color. She realized that some of her ideas were wrong. Her kids are Indian-American
- Andrew Scott- 3 kids have gone through the HB school system. 2 kids with hearing loss—He noted that when his first child went to the school there were deficiencies in how the school works with disabled kids. Very mindful of how all kids have every opportunity to grow into the people that they will become.
  - a. "What we are doing here is very important" – His daughter graduated this year and one speech at the graduation said how important it is to listen to each other and understand where the other is coming
  - b. The local/collective work to be transparent and bring forth issues that are difficult to talk about and come to an unified agreement
  - c. If we can't have these conversations, then we have a problem
  - d. He has concern that there are ideologies that can divide, and he'd like to bridge that gap of division
  - e. His experience in travelling in third world countries to help them frame what they think of this country and just how special this country is and he was moved to action due to all the civic unrest.
  - f. He'd like to have our kids see an accurate view of the history
- David Werner- Spent most of his life in CA and his oldest sons were seriously wounded marines, Dtr ICU nurse at mass General, married since 1981, retired as a lawyer, growing up – I understand injustice, hunger—He worked on high profile cases regarding racism/LGBTQ, Christian faith and to be with his grandkids

- a. -He did have cases with school districts and multiple depositions with educators
    - b. He wants to do everything he can to benefit kids
    - c. Diversity is something I cherish- we each have a bit of the truth to see the whole truth
    - d. Love is the answer to everything
  - Tiffany- grew up in FL and moved to NH as a teenager. Always grew up in diverse communities, but daily exposures were similar. Her mother is adopted and her step father is black. , she grew up comfortably and with the empowering message that she can be and do anything she wanted. She did not realize that this was not the experience for everyone.
    - a. She has a passion to teach and through teaching, she learned about equity
    - b. Foundational years were at charter schools, then took care of lower academic students in her third year of teaching- which demonstrated inequities.
    - c. Every single kid has the potential to be amazing.
    - d. It's important for schools to be communities to use their voices, safe spaces to use their voices and let them be heard
4. Next Steps: Meeting time every two weeks. → There are community members who are
- Resolutions- First resolution was presented June
  - 2weeks ago another was presented
  - Need to set up a framework for our work as a district and what our scope and goals of the committee.
  - The committee will help to develop a plan on how to implement a plan.
  - He would like to be cognizant of the teacher burden
  - He would like this framework will be developed alongside the strategic plan
  - He would like this to continue to develop and evolve throughout the district
  - The role of the group to paint a picture of what we would like to see as our children go through the system
  - This is a community initiative-
5. Meeting times: Send doodle poll-Possibly Thursday Evenings every 2weeks
6. Next Meeting: Establish group norms in communication and Create a statement on DEI with review of the proposed resolutions

## Hollis-Brookline Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative

SAU41 is committed to nondiscrimination and strives to be an inclusive community. The district recognizes that issues of diversity, equity and inclusion affect all members of the Hollis-Brookline community regardless of their background.

NH Senate Bill 263 came into effect in September 2019 including:

Section 193:39 Discrimination Prevention Policy Required. Each school district and chartered public school shall develop a policy that guides the development and implementation of a coordinated plan to prevent, assess the presence of, intervene in, and respond to incidents of discrimination on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, marital status, familial status, disability, religion, national origin or any other classes protected under RSA 354-A.

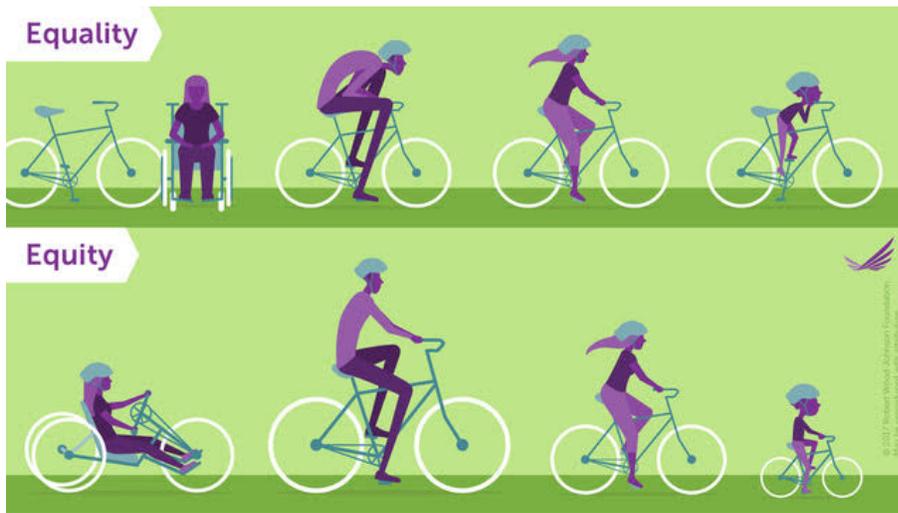
While this law is a benchmark, we are committed to create an even better environment for all students in the Hollis-Brookline community. HB Class of 2020 President, Joshua Ide, said in his graduation speech “I encourage you not just to be tolerant but seek to understand other people. It’s only then they will be willing to listen to your ideas.”

In envisioning the Hollis Brookline graduates of the future, it is the intention of the District to be explicit in the cultivation of a culture that values, respects and encourages our students to engage in difficult conversations with the goal of understanding each other and the world around them. We affirm freedom of speech, logic, reason, debate, and civil discourse and aim to graduate young adults who value those qualities and seek to be known for the content of their character.

For SAU #41, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are defined as:

**Diversity:** We commit to honoring diversity, which is expressed in many forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, physical appearance, cultural and personal experience, and political perspective. While group identity is important, we affirm the centrality of the individual student who is ultimately responsible for his or her own thoughts and actions.

**Equity:** Our vision of equity is best displayed in a visual.



Equity provides fairness in resources and opportunities so that all individual students get what they need. As a district, we seek to provide equality of opportunity to each of our students, helping them access their education in the best way possible for their individual needs and allowing our students to excel to the best of their abilities going forward to prepare to enter a competitive world. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, or weight, medical condition. Whether our students experience safe, nurturing home environments, or if they are impacted by physical, economic or developmental challenges our community recognizes that our schools can play an integral role in the facilitation of a student's experience by modeling positive interactions. We understand that creating a culture of mutual respect and value of perspectives can plant seeds of positive change in a child's life.

**Inclusion:** We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our school community is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard and where every individual feels a sense of value, belonging and inclusion. We know that by creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities.

Therefore, may it be resolved that:

1. The SAU #41 school districts will make diversity, equity, and inclusion a strategic priority by actively supporting such efforts.
2. SAU #41 will review its policies and procedures relative to diversity, equity, and inclusion and release a plan to address its findings as a part of SAU #41's strategic five year plan to be developed and voted on by the school boards in 2021.