

REIAC Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: 8/25/2020 (6:30pm - 8:30 pm)

Location: Zoom

Chair: Allison Lachaire

Minute Taker: Melissa Yang Rock

In attendance: A. Lachaire, J. Berry, J. Pizzarello, M. Yang Rock, S. Skiles, K. Masson Diedhiou, C. Sanchez, J. Avila Nativi, L. Hasbrouck, L. Andino-Skinner

Next report out to BOE: Who? Allison Lachaire will report out at the next BOE meeting
When? Sep 16th (6pm) (*Melissa Rock did the 8/19/20 report out*)

- I. Community Agreements
 - a. [Meeting Ground Rules](#)
 - b. Sophia Skiles proposed a way for us to develop our own organic meeting ground rules and guidelines that might come from our collective answering of the following questions (we decided to think through and ‘marinate’ on the following questions):
 - i. What do you need to feel heard and respected?
 - ii. What does positive discomfort that creates change look/sound like?
 - iii. What does negative discomfort that replicates systems of oppression look/sound like?
 - iv. Why does the District need REIAC?
 - c. Some of the above regarding the Ground Rules formation and REIAC’s work is dependent upon the NPCSD BOE charge for the committee - which needs to be updated. **As such, REIAC recommends/requests that the BOE work with REIAC at a joint retreat to update its charge for REIAC so that it can be most effective.**
 - i. Sophia will look into facilitator options.
- II. Establish minute-taker and Chair for next meeting
 - a. Chair: Melissa Y. Rock
 - b. Minutes: Kristen Masson Diedhiou
 - c. Report out - Kristen Masson Diedhiou
 - i. October 21 (*date needs to be confirmed*)
- III. Confirm date and time of next REIAC meeting
 - a. September 8, 6:30-8:30 (*time needs to be confirmed*)
- IV. New applications for membership (Applicants below were reviewed and new accepted members will be confirmed and invited to the next meeting.)
 - a. [REIAC application #3.pdf](#)
 - b. [REIAC application #4.pdf](#)
 - c. [REIAC application #5.pdf](#)
 - d. [REIAC application #6.pdf](#)
 - e. [REIAC application #7.pdf](#)

V. **New Business:**

- a. Should we create a checklist to be distributed to each building with particular considerations for their communication and surveys (especially under covid - that will hopefully become normalized so that it carries over post-covid...). Items that could be included on this brief checklist could include:
- Have documents/surveys sent to families been translated into spanish? (and other languages)
 - Have we included questions about internet access and technology access? (thus regularly assessing whether or not there are gaps, and also tap into community groups who would help raise funds to improve access as needed)
 - Have we included questions/information about food insecurity/resources? (to assess rising trends and take advantage of that opportunity to point families to a range of social services they may newly qualify for. This also helps to make visible the awareness that our community members are experiencing this pandemic in a large variety of ways - and we need to be aware of these trends in order to both have empathy and help.)
 - Teachers should review their "anchor" texts - doing an audit or inventory (perhaps by providing the links to the various rubrics for assessing them through a racial equity 'lens') - *this can be an ask for a later date.*

QUESTION TO ASK THE BOARD: are all communications that come out from the District mandated to be translated into Spanish and/or other languages?

- b. There was a discussion of how the district's use of the word "Equity" is being used to spread misinformation and create a scapegoat of blame regarding remote learning decisions and the roll-out of those various procedures and decisions under the covid-19 pandemic. There was no resolution, but to be watchful and mindful of the conversations ongoing in the community - and also to ponder ways to support greater transparency around the ways families have been/ are/ are newly struggling through this covid-19 pandemic that has exacerbated systemic inequities that were already present in our district/state/nation.
- c. **General Information:** NPUT would also like REIAC to know that about 20 of their union members are currently engaged in a book study with the book, *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad. They meet monthly via zoom and have an ongoing dialogue responding to journal prompts in the book. These teachers are doing this work on their own time (no salary credit) and paid for their own books. This speaks to the NPCSD/NPUT staff desire to be better and do better.
- d. **Racial Literacy Terms - Conscious Kid:** The district asked for REIAC's recommendations for a glossary to be published as a common resource on the district's website. This would support the district's efforts to establish our

common understanding of key terms/concepts that can be used in everyday situations, but also and importantly, in the development of school curriculum at the K-12 levels. After discussion, **REIAC approved the Conscious Kid Racial Literacy Key Terms and will recommend them at our next BOE report out:** <https://www.theconsciouskid.org/racial-literacy-key-terms>

e. Student names pronunciation and gender identity/pronouns:

i. At the 8/25/2020 report out, Melissa Rock brought up the recent communication REIAC received about the need for creating spaces on forms for parents/students to add pronunciation guides to help teachers/staff/administrators correctly say students' names. We also recommended adding a preferred pronoun field as well. Superintendent Urbina-Medina noted that she had experience with this at her previous district and confirmed that correctly saying students' names is an important first introduction to the school community. *We should follow up with the progress of this request at our next BOE report out.*

f. NPCSD faculty and staff should be encouraged to partner with/attend/organize **Black Lives Matter at School programming** with or alongside [SUNY New Paltz's Black Lives Matter at School](#) (student/faculty/staff) group. At the 8/25 BOE report out, Melissa Rock highlighted this recommendation and a discussion ensued over how this might work (Glenn asked if the district needed an invitation from the BLM@School group on campus). As the SUNY New Paltz campus group is a grassroots group (now with administrative support), there is no invitation required for the community to attend the bi-weekly meetings or get involved with, or promote educational programming that arises from these meetings. It was noted that perhaps what the district/BOE *can do* is incorporate explicit mention of the campus group and/or [national group](#) into their statement on antiracism in an effort to encourage faculty/staff/administrators in their pursuits of similar types of work/programming/curriculum integration at the K-12 district level.

Meeting adjourned around 8:30pm - with much left to discuss (see below)

VI. Tabled for the next meeting (suggesting breakouts during the meeting to be efficient with time):

a. Continue discussion of 2020-21 goals and subcommittees

i. [REIAC Immediate Priorities - Tasks List](#)

ii. Subcommittees:

1. *Website*)

a. Equity glossary, DACA resources, etc...

2. *Action Plan* for Addressing Racial Equity and Creating a Culturally Proficient District

3. Hiring and Retention of Staff Members of Color
 - a. A lot of work has been done by REIAC but changes were not institutionalized. Retention is an area of focus.
 - b. From Jennifer (Maestra): I am a union representative. I've reached out to Arielle Chiger (our president) about REIAC's charge to retain staff of color. We currently have a new teacher luncheon that covers mostly benefit trust information. Arielle is open to working together to make changes to our new-staff welcoming procedures and ways to make new members feel a part of our community. I am hoping to be a vital liaison between REIAC and the union.
 - c. **Recommend the creation of affinity spaces - discuss resources in Sophia's email (see links below)**
 - d. [To be successful today requires passion plus persistence, what we have called "grit".](#)
 - e. [Why People of Color Need Spaces Without White People](#)
 - f. [Making Space](#)
 - g. [How Racial Affinity Groups Saved My Life](#)
 - h. [Home\): Strategies](#)
4. Code of Conduct/Disciplinary Actions
 - a. We're still looking for data on referrals, suspensions (BOE was reminded of our request for this data at the 8/25 report out)
5. Student Groups
 - a. Racial Equity Committee at the high school (connect with Arlington students)
 - b. Affinity spaces (possibly connect with SUNY)
6. Curriculum/Culturally Responsive Practices

- b. Creation of affinity spaces within REIAC
- c. Determine how to share the recruiting video and review content and participants
 - i. Did we get more people on the video?
- d. Different reopening models and possible equity impacts (positive and negative)
 - i. Reopening/Remote Learning Anticipated Problems and Possible Solutions [Reopening/Remote Learning Anticipated Problems and Possible Solutions](#)

- VII. **Old Business (From June Meeting):** Discuss how immediate these concerns are in relation to building a partnership with the new Superintendent
- a. Review racist incident [protocols](#) shared Dr. Josefsberg
 - b. Racial Equity Professional Development/Curriculum development [RESOURCES](#)
 - c. Need to crowdsource "ground rules" for future meetings especially involving parent/child incidents
 - d. Written ground rules to address cross-talk, among other challenges that arise when discussing difficult topics- [Ground Rules](#) drafted by Cathy/Tricia

- e. Vision to focus our work and shape our communication:
 - i. Where does REIAC fit in?
 - ii. How can REIAC best serve the students, parents and community in collaboration with the BOE/admin?
- f. Yearly wrap up of our accomplishments, capture items that went unaddressed, and decide what to focus on for the future. [REIAC Immediate Priorities - Tasks List](#)

Previous Recommendations to the BOE:

- The district needs to adopt a racial equity/literacy glossary to help with building common language in order to build common understanding. We are including the glossary used by the Arlington School District as an example. *(This was mentioned to the BOE at the 8/25/2020 report out. The district agreed that having a common glossary was a good idea that could be posted on the district website. They requested that REIAC's recommendation for a suitable racial literacy glossary. REIAC agreed to provide our recommendation at the September 16th, 2020 report out)*
- Committee Students suggested that, instead of having stories about their culture/heritage chosen and told to them by a teacher who is not a member of their culture/heritage, why not have students choose and share stories of their culture/heritage from their perspectives. The goal is to create richer, more authentic conversations and learning opportunities. *(This was mentioned to the BOE at the 8/25/2020 report out).*
- The current Global Studies curriculum only has 3 days to cover South American history and no mention of pre-european American History. How is this being remedied? *(This brought up to the BOE at the 8/25/2020 report out - they said that was worthy of investigation.)*
- Creating a "Student Equity Team" to create a workshop for teachers taught by students. *(This was suggested to the BOE at the 8/25/2020 report out)*
- Workshop Topic: This is what we value/This is what's important to us. This is being done in the Arlington School district with positive feedback from the teachers.
- ~~Generation Ready should provide regular updates to the BOE and by extension the community on how the district is progressing with it's Curriculum updates. This way we can all assess if the money spent moves us forward on the Racial Equity Action Plan timeline? How are we measuring success of the Generation Ready Program? What data points are we measuring to show success?~~ No longer applicable, as the contract with Generation Ready is Null.
- Are our district teachers encouraged to participate in "BLM @ School" programming? SUNY New Paltz partners with other school districts to provide content for BLM week, can our district also partner with the college? *(This proposal/recommendation was discussed at the 8/25 report out - specifically suggesting that in the BOE commitment to anti-racism statement, there could be acknowledgement and encouragement that BLM @ School programming was being organized at the SUNY NP campus, and encouraging*

faculty/staff at NPCSD to get involved, encourage student attendance, or support similar/parallel programming at the K-12 levels by the district.)

- Code of Conduct = We're still looking for data on referrals, suspensions (*BOE was reminded of our request for this data at the 8/25 report out*)