

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION TASK FORCE

Education Subcommittee

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TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

REMOTE MEETING

Google Meet: Dial [1 314-730-0978] Pin #: [132 365 765#]

Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building

100 Maple Avenue

Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5398

MINUTES

Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 4:00 PM

Important Notice: Pursuant to Senate Bill 2475 signed into law by Governor Baker on June 16, 2021 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, this meeting of the **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force – Education Subcommittee** will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. All meetings and hearings listed in the agenda will also be done so through remote participation. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the town's website, at www.shrewsburyma.gov/coronavirus. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the town's website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting. To listen to this meeting, dial [1 314-730-0978] and enter the following pin: [132 365 765#]. Please mute your device.

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

June 22, 2021

Present: Amy Clouter, Deb DelDotto, Maura Egan, Lynsey Heffernan, Barbara Malone , Adeola Mbaneme, Joe Sawyer, Rajesh Velagapudi, Helen Horan Winn

Absent/Excused: Priya Rathnam

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chairperson Maura Egan. Maura shared the notice provision in regards to meeting virtually during COVID-19 pandemic.

A motion to accept the meeting minutes from May 17, 2021, was made by Lynsey Heffernan. A second was made by Rajesh Velagapudi The Education Subcommittee approved the minutes as written.

First item of business

Welcome to Joe Sawyer, Amy Clouter, Barb Malone- SPS Leadership Team

A welcome from the Education Subcommittee to the SPS Leadership Team and an appreciation of their time to join us.

Second item of business

Review and discuss the 4-part recommendations the Education Subcommittee made to the Town of Shrewsbury Select Board

-Recommendation One- Staff

1. Increase diversity in all staff across SPS
2. Provide ongoing DEI training for all staff - offer differentiated training opportunities
3. Continuous review and reflection of curriculum to ensure diverse voices are present
4. Mandatory antiracism training for new hires
5. Add a line in the contract to disavow racism and bias
6. Include a section in the employee handbook that disavows racism and bias

Superintendent Sawyer shared the success in recent hiring reflecting more diversity in the school staff moving forward to 2021-2022.

Amy shared that recent trainings had a common message of equity and inclusion. This will be continued moving forward. New teachers receive a Culturally Responsive Teaching training. In addition, training on Universal Design is ongoing. Feedback on all trainings is provided by staff.

Barb shared the district is posting job openings on U Mass, Worcester University, and Framingham University websites. A change in wording of the postings has been made. She mentioned this has appealed to new and present employees. She is also posting job openings on IMDiversity.

Good things are happening and how can we continue this moving forward? The school district has done much positive work on diversity, equity, and inclusion during a difficult year for all schools and districts.

The Education Subcommittee will be making our final recommendations in October to the Select Board. We want to continue to work in partnership with school leadership.

Recommendation Two –Families

1. Implement strategies to engage and make all families welcome
2. Work to make the PTO body more a reflection of the student body
3. Provide language translations for all reports going home to families
4. Include interpreters at all family events. (possibly parent volunteers)
5. All meetings which involve SPS include translations and close captions
6. Include more multicultural events in the schools and PTO meetings
7. Review fee structure for all school and town activities to ensure all families can be included
8. Offer a sliding scale fee for students on Free and Reduced Lunch program for school and town activities
9. Solicit donations to be used for families who cannot meet the fees for school and town activities

Superintendent Sawyer shared the district recently received an award on how to raise funds to assist families who have fallen behind on fees, i.e. bus fees. Many fees have an offset/discounts. The School District is very sensitive to understanding many families need assistance and is working on how to lower any barriers to fees. Donations were made to assist athletic departments.

Shrewsbury media and You-tube can translate school messages and notices in 12 languages. Phone calls also have translation available for families.

Translations are important at IEP meetings and IEP plans in addition to all school-sponsored family events.

Amy stated the need to study what is working and determine how we can leverage this more broadly. The district will be sending out a survey this summer.

How can we use all of the data we are collecting to be better, how do we refine what we are currently doing, and who has responsibility, are questions to address moving forward?

Recommendation Three –Students

- 1. Equal access to all curriculum by general education students, special education students and English language learners**
- 2. Regularly engage with students regarding the climate in their schools, classrooms, and school activities**
- 3. Continue to collect data on who is receiving special education services, participating in sports, on the honor roll, taking AP courses, participating in clubs**

A survey was completed during the last week of school by all students. It included 8 social awareness questions. Equity and Inclusion questions were part of the 5th to 12th grade survey. The survey tool used is Panorama. This tool is not anonymous, as it can track scores, but individual student's answers will not be available.

Discipline data is collected by DESE and is posted on the school profile page. Schools with low discipline scores will not have any data posted. Small infractions are not included in this data. It is possible collection of smaller infractions may be done at the district level for internal review in the future.

When collecting data, care must be taken to stay within legal regulations.

Data from Power School can be used for courses, etc.

IDEA, Title 9, and Title 6 were discussed. Updated training on Title 9 was recently provided to principals.

Expanded use of technology due to COVID was significant in the past school year. How can school teams analyze the consistency of technology uses and practices for continuation in the future?

Continual updating of school curriculum materials is important.

The district continues to educate a larger percentage of their special needs students in the district.

Third Item of Business

Listen to SPS Senior Leadership Team share the purpose and scope of the Panorama Survey to help further SPS's continued work toward its core value of equity and strategic priority of inclusion.

Fourth Item of Business

Brainstorm ways to work in partnership and parallel with SPS

Superintendent Sawyer stated the data collected from the Panorama Survey will be analyzed during the summer and presented and used in the new school year along with the parent survey. The DEI survey results will also be reviewed. Training for the leadership team will be held over the summer and planning will be done for Professional Development for staff 2021-2022. The Leadership Team's goal is to ensure the district continues to address diversity and what concrete plans can be put in place so the entire school community is a community of belonging.

Amy shared this requires ongoing planning to continue to address equity and inclusion. For example, how can social and emotional learning be included in the school day?

Barb shared creation of a welcoming culture is a goal.

Lynsey asked the Leadership Team as they meet over the summer to think about how we can weave into other parts of our community. Please continue to share.

Joe thanked the Education Subcommittee for their work and the goal is we all want students and families to feel included.

The Education Subcommittee thanked the Leadership Team for their time this afternoon and their commitment to our students and families.

Adjourn

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting was made by Lynsey, second by Adeola. The meeting ended at 5:10.

Minutes submitted

Deb DelDotto, Education Sub-Committee Clerk