
2021 FINAL REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

SHREWSBURY DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION TASK FORCE

October 4, 2021

Respectfully submitted to the Shrewsbury Board of Selectmen
from the Shrewsbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

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Shrewsbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

Acknowledgments

The Shrewsbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force would like to thank everyone who generously gave their time and expertise. The task force performed their work with support from the Shrewsbury Board of Selectmen, town officials, town leaders, countless residents, and guidance of Jon Wortmann, Executive and Facilitator. We would like to extend a special thank you to Taylor Galusha and Valerie Clemmey for their support during the past year.

Introduction

On August 11, 2020, The Board of Selectmen established a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force composed of an intentionally diverse cohort of Shrewsbury residents representing a cross section of the population. The task force was made up of one designee from the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Board of Health, Council on Aging, and Commission on Disabilities and the remaining members were appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The charge of the task force was as follows:

- Examine and evaluate existing policies and procedures currently in place within the Town of Shrewsbury related to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Complete this work by offering many opportunities for extensive community engagement employing a variety of means including but not limited to interviews, public listening sessions, surveys, programs, and social media
- Identify potential areas for improvement based on relevant local, state, and national research determining best practices
- Provide quarterly written updates to the Board of Selectmen highlighting work done and progress made
- Submit a written report detailing the findings and recommendations of the committee to the Board of Selectmen within 12 months from the creation of the committee

The DEI Task Force created multiple subcommittees, which worked to complete the charge put forth by the Board of Selectmen. The Task Force was led by nominated Co-Chairs, Ruth Febo and Adeola Mbaneme. The subcommittees were as follows:

DEI Task Force Co-Chairs Ruth Febo Adeola Mbaneme	Education Subcommittee Deb Deldotto Maura Egan (Chair) Lynsey Heffernan Adeola Mbaneme Priya Rathnam Rajesh Velagapudi Helene Winn	Employment Subcommittee Gene Buddenhagen Allen Jarrell (Chair until June 30, 2021) Milind Kanitkar Richard Petrucci (Vice-Chair then Chair after Allen Jarrell's resignation) Navjeet Singh	Healthcare Subcommittee Zoya Mehta Leonora Ryan (Chair) Janine Sands
Housing Subcommittee Ruth Febo Jennie Fishman (Chair) Louise Garone	Public Safety Subcommittee Juan Acosta Beth Casavant Elizabeth Hylton (Co-Chair) Donna Jarrell (Co-Chair) Kelly Joseph	Survey Subcommittee Paula Collins Deb DelDotto Maura Egan Jennie Fishman Milind Kanitkar (Chair)	Storytellers Subcommittee Noor Ali Paula Collins (Vice-Chair) Roop Jyot Kaur (Chair)

Summary Letter from Co-Chairs

To the Shrewsbury Board of Selectmen,

The Shrewsbury Diversity Equity and Inclusion Task Force spent many hours with our respective subcommittees finalizing research and data to complete our proposals and recommendations. We are pleased to present you with our final report of findings on ways to improve issues surrounding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the town of Shrewsbury. We would be remiss if we did not mention the significant amount of research, time, interviews, planning, and healthy debate that went into drafting this report. The final version of this report was presented to Task Force members on October 4, 2021, and these recommendations were approved by majority vote. We stand united in the belief that the contents in this report will act as a guide to developing a culture of community togetherness, belonging, and inclusivity.

Our hope is that the Board of Selectmen will carefully read this entire report and consider each proposal and recommendation in this report with a sense of urgency. We recommend that there be a permanent Shrewsbury DEI Town Committee that will take the lead on implementing these ideas and recommendations as soon as possible. We hope the committee will have ongoing support and backing from town leadership to develop programs and events that will fulfill the goals of each proposal.

As the report is sectioned by each subcommittee's proposals, we did notice a few overarching themes that we would like to present as cohesive recommendations from the entire Task Force. The following cohesive Task Force recommendations are as follows:

- Develop a permanent Shrewsbury DEI Committee made up of diverse members of the Shrewsbury community to guide and support DEI efforts in town, including the recommendations and implementation of this report. Ideally, the committee will include members from the original Task Force, who can provide context to the origination of each recommendation. We recommend the permanent DEI Committee be responsible for:
 - 1) ongoing collection and tracking of data to uncover disparities
 - 2) cultivating and supporting education, training and awareness opportunities for community members, town leadership, town employees and elected officials
 - 3) establishing benchmarks to measure progress and outcomes
 - 4) providing feedback and conducting race equity impact assessment for all policies and decision making
 - 5) advocating and driving equity efforts through budget priorities, policy, and practice changes
 - 6) addressing other issues not covered here that emerge, and
 - 7) support the town and affiliated organizations in effectively serving a very diverse town community.
- Conduct a top-down review of hiring practices, and official appointments at the town level to ensure that significant efforts go into building diverse candidate hiring pools across town departments. In addition, review ways to increase diversity in town leadership positions.

- Conduct a review of third-party vendors and procurements to ensure we are reviewing bids from a diverse pool of applicants for town contracts. Additionally, review ways to promote and encourage women and minority owned businesses in the Town of Shrewsbury.
- Create a permanent DEI webpage, on the Shrewsbury Town official website, that will include resources and educational material on topics of DEI and community belonging (more information on page 38 of this report, '*Resources for Residents of Shrewsbury Webpage*').

As you read the in-depth report, you will find significant details of the research that helped to inform the reasoning behind the recommendations made.

We recognize that there is a considerable amount of work that will go into the implementation strategies. We know that change does not happen overnight. We respect the town leaders and stakeholders who have the tough task of choosing how to best prioritize these recommendations. We are thankful for the opportunity to present this final report to you on behalf of the Shrewsbury DEI Task Force who have worked so diligently and tirelessly over the last year to ensure we were able to put together a comprehensive and thorough final document. We are honored that we have your attention on these very important yet delicate matters. As the Co-Chairs, we are available to provide further explanation or discussion on any of the topics pertaining to this report.

Lastly, to our neighbors, thank you for your support. Although this work is messy, the Task Force, members of this beautiful community, kept showing up to complete the charge in an effort to make our town more inclusive for everyone.

Sincerely,

Ruth Febo Co-Chair and Adeola Mbaneme Co-Chair

Shrewsbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

Shrewsbury DEI Task Force *Education Subcommittee*

Problem Statement

Ensure that all children and families feel included in all places and spaces in public schools and other Shrewsbury departments.

Recommendation 1 of 4

Increase diversity in all staff across Shrewsbury Public Schools

Recommendation

- Provide ongoing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) training for all staff and new hires including anti-racism training- offer differentiated training opportunities.
- Recommend antiracism training for new hires.
- Consider adding a line in the contract to disavow racism and bias.
- Include a section in the employee handbook that disavows racism and bias.

Deliverables and Success Criteria

- Result #1: Beginning in 2022-2023, for the next five years increase the diversity of the candidate pool by 5% year over year. By the 2025 -26 school year, at least 40% of the candidate pool will be diverse with the goal of a 5% increase in the diversity of staff year over year for the next five years.
- Result #2: By January 2022 inclusive language will be used for all job postings.
- Result #3: By September 2022 conduct a comprehensive review of district documents including staff handbooks and employee contracts (when in negotiations) to ensure language to disavow racism.

Problem Statement

Ensure that all children and families feel included in all places and spaces in public schools and other Shrewsbury departments.

Recommendation 2 of 4

Focus on all families in Shrewsbury Public Schools

Recommendation

- Implement strategies which engage families and make all families welcome.
- Building principals should encourage diverse participation at PTO and all school events.
- Provide language translations for all reports shared with families to ensure full participation.
- Include interpreters at family events when possible.
- Ensure meetings which involve SPS include translations and closed captions.
- Include more multicultural events in the schools and PTO meetings.
- Review fee structure for school and town activities to ensure all families can be included.
- Offer a sliding scale fee for students on Free and Reduced Lunch program for school and town activities.
- Solicit donations and/or use monies donated to Colonial Fund to be used for families who cannot meet the fees for school and town activities.

Deliverables and Success Criteria

- Result #1: Reduce overall fees charged to families, develop a sliding scale fee structure for all school district fees for the 2022-2023 academic year.
- Result #2: Conduct a review of the current language access plan by 2022-23 school year and present findings to the school committee for recommendations and improvements.
- Result #3: Create a pool of parent/caregiver volunteers willing to assist with translation at various school and district wide events.
- Result #4: Building principals and PTOs shall review measures to encourage increasing participation by diverse families.

Problem Statement

Ensure that all children and families feel included in all places and spaces in public schools and other Shrewsbury departments.

Recommendation 3 of 4 update

Focus on all students in Shrewsbury Public Schools

Recommendation

- Equal access to all curriculum by general education students, special education students, and English language learners.
- Regularly engage with students regarding the climate in their schools, classrooms, and school activities.
- Continue to collect and review demographic data on who is receiving special education services, participating in sports, on the honor roll, taking AP courses, and participating in clubs.
- Continue to review and adjust curriculum materials to ensure diverse voices are present, with a purposeful focus on representing diverse cultures, religions, and backgrounds.

Criteria

- Result #1: All students receive ongoing anti-bias and implicit bias training going forward from the 2022 -23 school year.
- Result #2: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) added to all harassment and bullying policies by 2022-23 school year.
- Result #3: Data collected shows an increase in diverse participants in sports, the honor roll, AP courses, and clubs by 2022-2023 school year.
- Result #4: The district shall develop a plan to ensure that age-appropriate anti-bias and implicit bias curriculum components are added to the K-12 curriculum and shall report out annually to the School Committee.

Problem Statement

Ensure that all children and families feel included in all places and spaces in public schools and other Shrewsbury departments.

Recommendation 4 of 4

Work in partnership with and parallel to Shrewsbury Public Schools Senior Leadership Team

Recommendation

- Data from the Panorama Survey will be collected and presented to the School Committee and to the community at large. Data from the Panorama survey will be analyzed in the 2021-2022 school year to support improvement.
- The DEI Task Force survey results will be reviewed by the Shrewsbury Public Schools Senior Leadership Team.
- Continue providing needed Professional Development for staff throughout the 2021-2022 school year and beyond.

Deliverables and Success Criteria

- Result #1: Ensure the district continues to address diversity and develop concrete plans that can be implemented so the entire SPS community is a community of belonging.
- Result #2: Using the Panorama survey results, conduct a gap analysis between where the district is today and where the district wants to be in three years. From this, create an action plan for areas that need more focus and attention. This data can be measured year over year using this year's data as a baseline.
- Result #3: Staff shall receive ongoing professional development based on the Panorama survey insights.
- Result #4: Members from DEI Task Force and members of SPS Senior Leadership team will meet by April 2022 to discuss the results of the DEI Task Force survey and create an action plan for areas that need more focus and attention.

Shrewsbury DEI Task Force *Employment Subcommittee*

Problem Statement

The town lacks coordinated employment policies that encourage diverse and inclusive hiring and training practices that ensures residents are treated equitably.

The goal of DEI policies should be to include protected classes as referenced in Massachusetts laws.

Recommendation 1 of 4

Recommendation

- Recommendation #1: The Town Departments should review and rewrite their policies and educate their employees with a DEI lens.
- Recommendation #2: The Town Departments should work together through their HR representatives to be more consistent in the development and implementation of policies.
- Recommendation #3: After initial implementation, summits should be held on a yearly basis with the various Town Departments and the future standing DEI Committee to improve policies.

Deliverables and Success Criteria

- Result #1: Policies are more explicit in mentioning DEI related issues, harassment mitigation and training requirements.
- Result #2: Policies and training go beyond compliance, and ultimately leadership should take ownership to set the tone.
- Result #3: Standard policy sections are utilized along with training that can be shared across Town Departments to take advantage of economies of scale.
- Result #4: HR policies are available for public review.

Problem Statement

Town recruitment efforts do not result in a diverse pool of applicants.

Data is deficient on diversity of the applicant pool, however, the lack of diversity in the current employee pool indicates the need for improvement in this area.

Recommendation 2 of 4

Recommendation

- Recommendation #1: The Town Departments should review and rewrite their job descriptions with a DEI lens.
- Recommendation #2: The Town Departments should reach out to a broader applicant pool by reaching out to organizations with a higher percentage of diversity.
- Recommendation #3: The Town Departments should utilize methods such as internships, apprenticeships and co-ops from local colleges, universities, community colleges and technical/vocational high schools to attract diverse candidates and encourage them to apply for positions.
- Recommendation #4: If a recruitment agency is used by the Town Departments to find qualified candidates it should be given a target for the share of the applicant pool representing diverse applicants that matches the diversity of Worcester County.
- Recommendation #5: The Town Departments should standardize systems for collecting and maintaining job application data that tracks necessary data on protected classes (e.g., Ethnicity, race, gender identity).

Deliverables and Success Criteria

- Result #1: A pool of affinity groups and associations affiliated with various protected classes and town-based community groups is developed and used for recruitment efforts.
- Result #2: Data is gathered to form a baseline for current diversity in recruitment and maintained to show progress.
- Result #3: Diversity in recruitment matches the diversity in the Worcester County.

Problem Statement

The town hiring does not reflect the diversity of the community.

The Munis data provided indicates Shrewsbury employment demographics skew to White race and do not reflect Town demographics as a whole.

Recommendation 3 of 4

Recommendation

- Recommendation #1: Where feasible, the school's initiative to improve the diversity of its staff by identifying pathways from substitute and paraprofessional roles to licensed teaching positions, including receiving equivalency in Massachusetts for education received in other countries or by getting credit for foreign licensure, should be supported, and replicated by SELCO and Town Departments that have licensing requirements.
- Recommendation #2: Hiring managers in the Town Departments should aim to interview candidates representing all protected classes, if available, at percentages that reflect the demographics of Worcester County. Interviews should be structured in a manner to minimize bias in the process.
- Recommendation #3: The interview panel makeup should be diverse and at least one member should match the diversity profile of the applicant if possible.
- Recommendation #4: Diversity objectives, as well as experience, should be taken into consideration for succession planning.
- Recommendation #5: Every effort should be made when filling volunteer roles and committee appointments by Selectmen/Town Moderator/Town Manager to include diverse applicants. Use all available means to solicit candidates – town website, library, department newsletters and town cable channels.
- Recommendation #6: Town should make continued efforts to support, promote and retain a diverse employee base.

Deliverables and Success Criteria

- Result #1: Within five years (by 2026) the demographics of the employees of the town should reflect the demographics of Worcester County (based on average for 2020-2024).
- Result #2: Data collections are enhanced to ensure diversity metrics are being tracked and maintained.
- Result #3: Union contracts are reviewed and negotiated, when possible, with a DEI lens.
- Result #4: Publish diversity metrics of the town employees at the town level (town website).

Problem Statement

Training efforts related to DEI are not consistent across all town departments.

Discussions with HR leaders reveal that for most of the Town Departments have little specific diversity training offered. The schools provide an annual compliance training.

Recommendation 4 of 4

Recommendation

- Recommendation #1: The Town Departments should ensure that all employees and managers get at least 8 hours of annual training on diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as training every other year on addressing bias and unconscious bias.
- Recommendation #2: Those in customer service roles should be provided cultural training to familiarize them with the diversity of residents in the town.
- Recommendation #3: A separate volunteer task force/committee should be formed to support and improve DEI training.

Deliverables and Success Criteria

- Result #1: Training plans are updated and are a Key Performance Indicator.
- Result #2: Since the hiring is done by the current members of the Town Departments, the training aspect, or lack thereof, cannot be overlooked, especially in the way of unconscious Bias. Those doing the hiring must go beyond looking at the training as just a compliance component.
- Result #3: A volunteer committee is formed to assist and continuously engage with Town Departments regarding DEI training.

Shrewsbury DEI Task Force *Healthcare Subcommittee*

Problem Statement

Shrewsbury's only food pantry has seen a tremendous increase in demand. Food insecurity affects people's health. It can cause depression and anxiety. There needs to be provisions made to achieve equity and inclusion for this problem.

Recommendation 1 of 2

Recommendation

- Recommendation #1: Establish another food pantry or another day in addition to the one at St. Ann's Parish.
- Recommendation #2: Increase the number of volunteers through businesses and schools.
- Recommendation #3: Propose a budget to achieve consistent food allocation.

Deliverables and Success Criteria

- Result #1: Increased availability of food.
- Result #2: Increased volunteers who are available for pick-up and distribution of food.
- Result #3: Establishment of a budget which would allow allocation of funds when needed.

Problem Statement

Cavities represent the most common childhood illness. All school age children should have the benefit of adequate dental care which is equitable to children who are insured. There is no program available to children who are uninsured or underinsured to receive sealants.

Recommendation 2 of 2

Recommendation

- Recommendation #1. Participation in the SEALS program which is offered by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. There is no charge for this service. This could be the only dental health some students receive.
- Recommendation #2: Provide dental services as an essential health benefit.
- Recommendation #3: Work with the Superintendent of Schools, the School Committee, and a task force to make this program available to school age children.

Deliverables and Success Criteria

- Result #1: To have the SEALS program available to all school age children.
- Result #2: Prevention of up to 90% of cavities in children.
- Result #3: Children receive screenings, education, dental sealants, and fluoride.

Shrewsbury DEI Task Force *Housing Subcommittee*

Introduction

The housing subcommittee wants to promote building trust among all groups represented and underrepresented in this community. As part of the committee's work, we looked at the data available from the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination and the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General. This research revealed 6 incidents of housing discrimination reported over a 14-year period. As referenced in previous reports submitted to the Board of Selectmen, this is lower than expected when randomly distributed in proportion to population. That discrepancy undermines confidence that housing discrimination is low here. If housing discrimination is under reported it could be because people do not know how to report it, they expect their voice will not be heard, or they do not believe that anything will change/improve. Members of marginalized and minority classes experience repeated microaggression which can lead to suppressed interest in social engagement and community involvement. The 2020 census showed that Shrewsbury has experienced a significant increase in diversity among its residents. To capitalize on the growth in diversity, Shrewsbury needs an informed and empowered population dedicated to ensuring housing equity within the community.

Problem statement

The Town of Shrewsbury does not provide information about housing, renter's rights, housing access, Town housing plan, and other helpful resources on its public website. It would be beneficial to the town's residents to have a page of links to housing related resources.

Recommendation 1 of 2

Recommendation

- Collect the following links under the heading "General Resources for Homebuyer and Renters"
 - Resources for Communities and People, Worcester
<http://www.rcapsolutions.org/education-training-client-resources/>
 - The Massachusetts Accessible Housing Registry [Home | Mass Access Housing Registry](#)
 - The Shrewsbury Housing Authority [Shrewsbury Housing Authority \(shrewsburyha.org\)](http://shrewsburyha.org)
 - Worcester Family Resource Center <https://www.sevenhills.org/programs/worcester-family-resource-center>
- Collect links to the following on a single webpage, easily accessed from shrewsburyma.gov, under the header "Information about Housing in Shrewsbury"
 - Most recent Annual Report
 - Town of Shrewsbury Master Plan [2016 ShrewsburyMasterPlan](#)
 - Town of Shrewsbury Housing Production Plan [Microsoft Word - HousingProductionPlan_MidCensusUpdate_2018_DRAFT \(shrewsburyma.gov\)](#)
 - Link to the town Planning Board [Planning Board | Shrewsbury, MA \(shrewsburyma.gov\)](#)
 - Link to the town zoning map [Zoning-Map-August-8-2020 \(shrewsburyma.gov\)](#)
- Collect the following links under the header "Understand the Law and how to respond productively if you have been the target of a discriminatory housing practice"
 - Link to the Massachusetts Association of Realtors Fair Housing Act Resources for Renters, For Landlords and For Realtors <https://www.marealtor.com/fair-housing/>
 - Link to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development [DHCD Fair Housing and Civil Rights Information | Mass.gov](#)
 - Link to the MCAS [Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination | Mass.gov](#)
 - Link to Office of the Attorney General of Massachusetts [File a civil rights complaint | Mass.gov](#)

Problem statement

Access to housing education locally is not currently available in Shrewsbury. A resident interested in learning more about housing would have to find them in another community. Barriers, such as transportation and/or cost can limit a resident's access to these learning opportunities.

Recommendation 2 of 2

Recommendation

Offering seminars, facilitated by housing professionals (**R**esources for **C**ommunities and **P**eople (RCAP Solutions) at the Shrewsbury Library, or other easily accessed municipal location on an annual or bi-annual basis would allow Shrewsbury residents an opportunity to ask questions and get real time answers.

- With help from the Shrewsbury Public Library, provide public support for a seminar on renters' rights
- With help from the Shrewsbury Public Library, provide public support for a seminar on housing rights targeted to landlords and building managers.

Shrewsbury DEI Task Force *Public Safety Subcommittee*

Problem Statement

In order to fulfill its mission to “consistently deliver quality police service to the community,” the Town of Shrewsbury Police Department should prioritize transparency, invest in creating transformative culture and practice changes, and focus on improving police-community relations with residents of color.

Recommendation 1 of 8

Collection and Tracking of Data

- There are significant gaps in SPD’s data collection and management practices. We cannot fix what we cannot measure, and although the data that does exist is incomplete, it does reveal racial disparities. According to the Census Bureau, Shrewsbury’s population in 2019 was estimated to be 3% Black or African American. Data collected from traffic stops from 2017-2020 reveals individuals identified as Black accounted for a disproportionate number of citations, often nearly double the rate of the population (8.4%, 9.1%, 7.8%, 5.0%).
- **We recommend that SPD create a data governance system to establish practices and protocol for how data is being collected, tracked, and used to inform decision-making.** We also recommend steps to support transparency such as regularly publishing data on the Town’s website including breakdowns of service calls, traffic stop and other police interactions disaggregated by race, language, and gender.

Recommendation 2 of 8

Race Equity Policy Review

- Systems and practices governing our community are maintained through policies, and it is important to acknowledge that historically policies have often been deeply racialized and designed both intentionally and unintentionally to disadvantage people of color. We need to focus on outcomes, not intent, and evaluate the impact of policies on inequities.
- According to Chief Anderson, the SPD is scheduled to review and update department policies by May 1, 2022 (*outsourced to Lexipol LLC – a for-profit police policymaking firm*).
- **We recommend that SPD hire an expert consultant to conduct a thorough and complete review of all police department policies and practices using a race equity lens. We additionally recommend a public engagement component to this policy review to encourage transparency and democratic participation.**

Recommendation 3 of 8

End In-School Resource Officer (SRO) Program

- The Town of Shrewsbury has two (2) designated School Resource Officers – 1 for the elementary and middle schools and 1 for the high school. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), a trade organization for SROs defined the role as encompassing three responsibilities: law enforcement officer, counselor, and teacher.
- The prevalence of SRO programs has expanded over the past few decades, but despite millions in federal funding and local taxpayer dollars, research overwhelmingly suggests that the presence of SROs has had no measurable impact on school safety. In fact, among certain demographic groups – including females and African Americans – students report feeling less safe with SROs present.
- The link between SROs and the School to Prison Pipeline is definitive and one which is highly racialized. The presence of an SRO in a school increases the likelihood of expulsion due to disciplinary action (Pigott, 2016) which disproportionately affects students of color, specifically Black males. This trend holds true in Shrewsbury as “students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities and black students are suspended at the highest rates” (Assabet 2020). The presence of SROs directly contributes to the criminalization of children of color as schools with SROs more frequently refer students to juvenile justice involvement even for non-serious, non-violent offenses (Nance 2015).
- **We recommend ending the in-school resource officer program and instead focus on creating an alternative school safety/security plan and investing in new strategies and programs to foster positive Police-Youth interactions.**

Recommendation 4 of 8

End Civil Service in Shrewsbury

- The Civil Service Law enacted in 1884 was designed to end corruption and patronage in municipal hiring; today however it is the most substantial structural barrier preventing the diversification of public safety workforces.
- Currently, there is significant momentum, political will (both across the State and locally) and successful precedent to end civil service in Shrewsbury.
- **We recommend the Town initiate the process of opting out of civil service as a necessary step towards creating a public safety workforce that better mirrors the demographic composition of the residents in town.**

Recommendation 5 of 8

Create a Civilian Review Board

- Accountability is a critically important aspect of building community trust of public safety officials. Creating a genuinely accountable and transparent police force requires mechanisms that can address both individual/interpersonal concerns as well as institutional ones.
- **We recommend that Shrewsbury establish a Civilian Review Board (CRB) where residents can bring forth concerns or complaints of misconduct and discrimination. It is imperative that a CRB be designed to work for the people, and avoid historical missteps that hinder usefulness. An effective CRB will be independent, transparent, resourced (including a budget) and have investigative and disciplinary authority including subpoena power (Moore 2020).**
- “An Act Relative to Justice, Equity and Accountability in Law Enforcement in the Commonwealth” signed by Governor Baker in 2020 created a Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST) which will have the power to review and reprimand officers in certain cases of misconduct. While it is unclear exactly how this commission will operate in collaboration with local oversight bodies, we believe that there is value to establishing a mechanism for local control and accountability of our police force. We recommend that Shrewsbury’s prospective CRB work cooperatively with POST to ensure that complaints which do not rise to the level of intervention by the state, will be handled by the local CRB.

Recommendation 6 of 8

Training

- As required by the Municipal Police Training Committee, Shrewsbury Police Department staff must complete four (4) mandatory trainings annually, all of which are operational and procedural (*CPR/First Responder, Defensive Tactics/Use of Force, Firearms training, Legal Update*). This training regimen is woefully inadequate to support the complexities of modern-day policing.
- In order to prepare and build police forces that are more equipped to navigate and respond to community challenges, we must address deficits in skill acquisition and development as well as in officer health and wellness. This priority shift is also necessary to reframe the role of public safety professionals in the eyes of the public.
- **We recommend that SPD incorporate a number of supplemental trainings into their mandatory requirements for staff that focus on “cognitive, emotional, social and moral” competencies (Blumberg 2019). It is also recommended that SPD implement a self-assessment tool to help personnel measure and understand their own implicit biases. These findings will help inform individual and departmental professional development and training needs.**

Recommendation 7 of 8

Community Engagement

- Irrefutably, communities of color have experienced disproportionate discrimination and violence at the hands of police. Essential to building relationships with people of color is understanding the racial history of policing in this country and that the BIPOC community's distrust and fear of police is deeply rooted in this history.
- The Shrewsbury Police Department holds an important platform to help influence a culture of anti-racism in the community. Building confidence and trust in law enforcement requires sustained and strategic effort to foster strong connections through shared engagement.
- We recommend that Shrewsbury establish a Public Safety Engagement Board comprised of public safety representatives, residents, local businesses, and community leaders.
- Aligned with Chief Anderson's 21st Century Policing Model, this Board will be responsible for creating and executing an intentional community outreach, communications, and engagement strategy to include: 1) community events, conversations and listening sessions; 2) proactive social media communications to help advance messages of equity, anti-racism, community, and biased-free policing.

Recommendation 8 of 8

Remove Thin Blue Line Symbol

- As described by Chief Anderson, "the thin blue line flag features a black and white image of the American flag with the horizontal stripe beneath the field of white stars on the black background. The stars represent the citizenry who stand for justice and order. The darkness represents chaos and anarchy, and according to some, a memorial to the deaths of those law officers who have perished in the line of duty."
- While for many this symbol is viewed as a sign of pride and respect for law enforcement, in recent years this imagery has been co-opted by extremists and has become inextricably linked to hateful ideology and opposition to racial justice movements like Black Lives Matter. While not the original intent, this symbol now embodies values and behaviors that run counter to the principles guiding the Shrewsbury Police Department in their commitment to providing services to the community.
- **We recommend that SPD take immediate steps to phase-out the "thin blue line" symbol from its uniforms and other department issued equipment. Ongoing use of this divisive image harms law enforcement relationships especially with communities of color who find this symbol threatening.**

Shrewsbury DEI Task Force *Storytellers Subcommittee*

Introduction

The Story-teller Subcommittee was established to gather stories that support the work done in the other sub committees. We reached out to residents via Facebook (both official and unofficial pages), The Community Advocate, the town website, and personal outreach over a two-month period. We held a panel discussion on Shrewsbury Media Cable to educate residents on the task force mission and also send a call out for stories. Residents were encouraged to share their stories to help us illuminate our collective understanding of how Shrewsbury can be a more inclusive home for us all where our differences are celebrated. Approximately 20 participants shared their experiences. It is important to note here that all the stories shared were submitted by people over 18 years of age. To read anecdotal vignettes by people under 18, Shrewsbury high school students and alumni have an Instagram page. Furthermore, the unofficial Town of Shrewsbury pages provide evidence around the diversity, equity, and inclusion social climate of the town. Conversations around racism often cause discomfort to town residents. We have evidenced that people wrote things like they “had the feeling that this town was great because we were above the political trash that causes divide”, and that they believed that “they nor anyone they went to school with is racist and we didn’t need critical race theory to teach us to be nice people”, to “leave the town as it is because it’s great”, and that “trying to change someone’s opinion is disrespectful”, “being contrary when someone whose opinion differs from yours says more about your character than it does about the topic”, “anti-racism is racist”, “racial profiling isn’t a thing”, and the like.

Positive Stories

One participant reached out to share the positive experience they had had at the Senior Center. They said “I have had very positive experiences with the Shrewsbury Senior Center. When I have needed help, the staff has gone out of their way to be helpful, from coordinating transportation to providing information on Covid 19 vaccination service. The Shrewsbury Public Library has also been outstanding especially, during the pandemic, they never missed a beat to provide the services I needed. Hopefully, there will be more volunteer opportunities in the future for Shrewsbury Seniors Citizens, like myself”. One participant shared that they had positive experiences in Shrewsbury. They needed an accommodation made at a salon because they are Muslim and cover their hair. As they went to the salon the person there made sure that they had a comfortable experience and there were no males present when she had her hair done. The participant noted that this accommodation was made for her both times she visited that salon.

Experiences around Differently Abled/Lack of Accommodations

One participant stated that they were “concerned about how children with physical disabilities cannot play on the community and school playgrounds because the wood chip floorings are not accessible to them, nothing can be done about it” due to the cost involved. The participant asked “why is it OK to exclude these children with disabilities? What are we teaching children who can play in the playgrounds but their friends are excluded?” The participant was also “concerned about the separate but equal policy for softball and baseball fields. Why is it OK for the baseball fields at Dean Park to have lights, neatly groomed fields, scoreboards, and snack bar and not for the girls who play on the softball fields? Why is this OK for the boys to have better conditions to play baseball while girls who play softball can't have it as

well”? It is important to note here that this concern has been raised several times before on the town’s unofficial Facebook pages. They added that “children with disabilities are also at risk for bullying as well”.

Shrewsbury Public Schools offered all parents the choice between hybrid in-person schooling or online during the pandemic. An ELL child with a significant learning gap preferred 100% online”. During the pandemic the family arranged for a bilingual tutor to assist her learning as well as online experience. The family was told that the ELL program would be hybrid and they were encouraged to switch the student to this program. When the family did not want the switch, they were told this was okay and that an online program would be set up. Two weeks later the student was not accommodated and it seemed like no plan was in place and the communication to SPS was bouncing back. The family then decided to place the child in the hybrid setting and filed a complaint that they later revoked since no resolution was required any more.

Experiences of Microaggressions and Systemic Racism

A participant was “concerned how the diverse communities do not speak out against the bullying that occurs in grades K-12 affecting their children. Please put programs in place to encourage parents to speak out and to teach their children to speak out”.

A participant shared that the “first experience of racism that I could understand was in third grade. There was a little boy I would talk to every day. I considered him one of my best friends...one day I got it in my head to ask him if he was my boyfriend to which he replied, “no, chocolate and vanilla don’t mix!” I was heartbroken. He didn’t say, “no, you’re my best friend!” he pointed specifically to my race and his as a barrier”.

A participant shared that they “moved to NE so my kids wouldn’t experience the kind of anti-Semitism I did growing up in the South. It was better for my daughter, but my son has been harassed in school. He has had pennies rolled to him. He has been called a f\$@king Jew. He has been insulted and belittled. Racism is alive and well at SPS”.

Another story that was shared stated that “other issues of race persisted throughout my childhood here - from hearing stereotypes repeated over and over again about what Black people are like...to assumptions about my family and our background, to assertions that we shouldn’t care as much about racism (here, elsewhere or anywhere) because we were richer than they were”.

One participant shared that “my kids are part of the Shrewsbury *sports team* and I get stares and looks just by bringing my children to baseball. Wherever I sit down the families move away from us as if something were wrong. Just sad”. Another participant shared that her “mother as an immigrant Black woman never really felt like the other parents here opened up to and welcomed her in the 1980s and 1990s”. It was also shared by a participant that they had observed that black males “seemed to have an easier time [than girls] making and keeping friends in the schools here”.

In these narratives it was also shared by a participant that “a mother of another student in town [told her] not to wear a bandana which was a pale pink and matched my pale pink shirt and denim skirt because people would think I was in a gang. I knew she meant because I was a Black child wearing a bandana. The participant noted that even though they retorted in this incident, they should not have had to do that.

A participant shared “I was told many times over the years that I wasn't, “like other Black people,” or that I, “talked white,” or “acted white,” when I did things that should be considered race neutral (speaking in the local dialect, dressing like the other kids, achieving good marks in school), and when I didn't address those underlying assumptions about what other Black people or like or why my acting like every other kid that grew up here was a factor of erasing my race, I wish I had. The underlying assumption - which is a White supremacist assumption- was always that this was a compliment- that I should be grateful to be associated with Whiteness and distanced from Blackness and places value on Whiteness and things associated with Whiteness – largely due to segregation and exclusionary system policies - above Blackness”.

Another participant shared “I am a Shrewsbury resident since ***, and I started working at **** I used to pray in the chapel of the hospital for several months, which is about 10 minutes walking from the ***. I placed a request to the office of diversity and inclusion for a praying/multifaith room in the *** so that many people can take advantage of it, including myself. The Director of Diversity & Equal Opportunity requested a letter from a clergy to support my request for such an accommodation. I submitted that letter but unfortunately my request was refused and I was recommended to check with my supervisor and my department. My supervisor...offered me a temporary room that is very close to the lab I work in. I advised other Muslims to use it until we find a permanent solution. So, this is definitely not the end of my journey. From this I learned to speak up and be even more proud of my identity as a Muslim”.

Yet another participant shared “My first memory goes back to a few days after the unfortunate and horrible attacks on our country on 9/11 in 2001. Due to our appearance, practicing Sikhs found themselves on the receiving end of brutal hate crimes around the country. I personally faced two life threatening situations, one of which happened in Shrewsbury. I was living in an apartment of ***, and the morning after 9/11 a man tried to ram his truck into my car as I was pulling out of the parking lot. I swerved my car onto the grass. He stopped his truck and glared at me with angry eyes. With his hands he made the shape of a pistol (with his thumb and index finger), pointed it at me and pretended to shoot me. He drove on. I reported this incident in a national database of 9/11 related crimes against Sikhs. I was contacted by a journalist from the Boston Globe and he published my story. The day after my story was published, I received phone calls and emails from both strangers and friends alike. They offered me both support and condemnation of the vicious hate crimes Sikh-Americans were being subjected to throughout the country”.

Enough issues were encountered by a participant around racism in the district that they transferred to a school out of the district. These included “despite receiving high marks and being selected to take the SATs early, my 8th grade teachers inexplicably refused to enroll me in any AP classes for 9th grade despite my parent's intervention”. A participant felt that their education “in Shrewsbury did not adequately incorporate the history, perspectives or experiences of Black people and other people of color” and in their experience did not have a black teacher or administrator in the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

A participant shared that they had employed a Black piano teacher for their children, “our music teacher is a former veteran and the most decent person there can be. He generally parks his car on the street and walks to our house whenever he has a session with our children. This has been going on for years. One day while he was leaving our house after teaching our kids, a Shrewsbury police car pulls up and starts questioning him. He was obviously aggravated by the insult, points to our house and walked away. My

wife, who noticed, opened the door, and went to the policeman and asked him if there was a problem. The policeman very respectfully informed her that some neighbor had filed a complaint of a "suspicious" looking individual in our house and he had to investigate it. My wife duly informed the policeman that he was a trusted individual who we knew for years. It is unfortunate that some neighbor found our music teacher suspicious looking. It was a firsthand example for us, as to what black men have to deal with".

Racist experiences ranged from microaggressions, comments, to also blatantly being discriminatory. Participants had been called "terrorists", told "to go back home" on several occasions in the town. Town residents will often question the residential status of people of color assuming that they were not born here, raised here, or live here. When such people state that they went to the local elementary school, white Shrewsbury citizens will showcase shock. A participant reported that "a White person in town tried to ingratiate themselves to me by telling me that they grew up poor in a single-family home assuming that this would be common ground" with the participant who is non-white.

Yet another participant shared "I am fortunate to have many advantages in my life and background. I didn't realize how those had shaped my life until later. So, it's important for me to make sure my children understand that not everyone has the same home life or experiences as they do, and they need to be allies for others. To that end I took my middle school son to the BLM walk that was organized by Shrewsbury high school students. As we walked to town center, we were booed. We are white, we carried no signs, I wasn't surprised by the response (just disappointed) but my son was. As we later walked home, he and I spoke about his experiences in school, what friends he has, etc. (From his birthday parties and friends, I know he has a diverse group he hangs with) Suddenly a lightbulb went off for him when I asked about his teachers- he'd only had one non-white teacher and that was for foreign language. He suddenly realized what it might be like for non-white students to have only white teachers. I hope he understood that he was also missing out".

A person of color was involved in a minor fender bender due to road conditions. In this incident the person ensured the other driver was ok and told them that they had never been in an accident before to which the driver said, "I better not lie about the accident or try to get out of paying for it until she realized that our children attended school together and she apologized".

A participant noted that they were called vicious names like Osama Bin Laden in the center of Shrewsbury. "Once when filling gas in the center of town I was threateningly approached by a young man who called me Osama and that I should leave his country. I calmly told him that this is my country. Something changed in him, he apologized and he said good night and walked away".

One participant shared "I first became aware that I was different, and that the different I was, was bad on the playground of *** School. Two white girls got into an argument, and I was standing nearby. They threw insults back and forth, and then I became the verbal punching bag. Me a quiet bystander who was so shy I never talked to anyone. Her exact words were, the other girl, "at least my skin isn't her color!" This was the first understanding of what my skin meant in this country"

A participant reported that in middle school during a lesson on slavery the "social studies teacher thought that I needed to be reminded that my ancestors had been enslaved. During her lecture on slavery, she decided to single me out by saying the slaves in America were, "some of ***'s ancestors. Imagine being a

child and the only thing your social studies teacher could acknowledge about you and your ancestors was that they had been enslaved.

Another incident shared was when the participant was “campaigning for a friend standing for a local election. We were in the center of town holding signs for him. He was there too but far away. A man in a truck was standing at a red light and shouted a racist rant at us. My daughter, who was standing near me, heard him, and told me that he was shouting at us. Having experienced such racist taunts innumerable times, I just told her to ignore him. That evening, my friend who found out about this incident messaged me that he was told about the intolerant abuse which was thrown at my daughter and I. He told me that he knew the person in the truck and would no longer speak to him or entertain him as he did not wish to associate with racist and intolerant people”.

A participant shared that they wanted to “to add that intolerance is not only by the majority. It can come from all of us. I have faced unfortunate incidents from within the South Asian communities here in Shrewsbury as well. I am sure my own community is equally guilty. I have been called a diaper head by a child in a store and a "Kafir" (a derogatory term for a non-believer) by a young man. Both were members of our Shrewsbury South Asian community”.

People of color also noted that they are often thought to not be homeowners “neighbors come to my house and question if I own it, how I can afford it, and what I do for work. I had one such neighbor asks me at least three times if I own my own home”. Similarly, participants noted that people often questioned the educational credentials of non-white residents.

One participant shared their experience of going to an SPS school when they were invited to read a book about their heritage to the children. “One of the parents stopped me after to chat. Then proceeded to ask me if I went to high school in Shrewsbury. I responded no and said I had attended *** elite private school. She then asked, "did you play any sports," to which I replied, "field hockey." Her response to this was, "Oh that's why." Because there was no other way I could have possibly got into an elite school unless I played a sport. I had not gone to the school based on sport.

Another participant noted hostile patterns in social media feeds against non-white residents “as our town has moved informally to utilize online message boards, I have been attacked personally by community members - having several go on to my personal Facebook page to gather personal information and/or steal pictures and post them about me, and to address me inappropriately in the public groups and forums outside of Facebook. I myself have been and I have watched other women of color be silenced and tone policed in online spaces in town for speaking out about racism and injustice, although this has started to change of late especially after the death of George Floyd. I've had people in this town speak ill of other people of color to me because they were speaking out about injustice under the assumption that I'm a “safe” Black person”.

Another participant shared that “a few years ago, we were living in a pet free community in town. I am scared of dogs since childhood. My neighbor at the time who was white saw that I was getting scared of her dog. Instead of taking the dog away, she started screaming and swearing at me. She said that she knew we live on rent (even though we were owners, she perhaps thought that maybe because of our skin color, we could not possibly be owners) and that she will do what she pleases. She said the dog was her baby and that I have to adjust”.

A participant shared that “after a PTO meeting where I felt like all of my ideas were dismissed, I sent the following message to the PTO Board to communicate my main points: "I strongly believe that part of our responsibility as a Parent/Teacher Organization is to provide specific and intentional support for vulnerable and/or underrepresented children and think we need to make some space in the budget for it up front. To give a few examples, we could hire tutors or pay teachers a stipend to run a homework club after school for kids who are struggling to keep up, publicize scholarships for enrichment activities for families that can't afford it, create sensory friendly events or sensory friendly spaces within existing events, increase community outreach and support, etc. Along the same line, I also think it's both necessary and beneficial for the student body at large to increase multicultural programming or at least add multicultural components within existing programming throughout the year. I have ideas about ways we can do all of this and I am willing to put in the work to make these happen. I understand that we had a time restraint last night and that they were rushing through a lot of content, but I felt like some of my ideas were dismissed when I brought them up and hope they can be part of our ongoing discussions throughout the year. "This e-mail resulted in a meeting between myself, the school principal, and the PTO president where they explained "how things work around here" and that there's really no space in the budget for these ideas”.

One participant succinctly stated that “while I understand that this request was likely meant to focus on issues that are systemic as opposed to personal, I would ask that the committee consider how the personal beliefs of our community members may be impacting how our town feels about systemic issues of racism as they might exist in our community and how this might impact attempts at reducing such issues in the future or to fully understanding these issues. I would also note that to the extent that these issues feel like individual ones and personal experiences, many of them happen elsewhere all the time and are part of a larger misunderstanding of what it means to be Black in our country and our world”.

It was noted that a request was made to the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager to address issues of racism. The Town Manager met with them and “explained how things work in the town” and suggested that this work could potentially be done under a different department. It was clear that this work was not being done, and nothing was done after the meeting. “After the murder of George Floyd, I wrote a post on Facebook explaining that I had met with the town manager and suggested the creation of a meeting and that he didn't feel like it was necessary, but that hopefully this could be done. Within minutes, the town manager e-mailed me and told me to take my post down because he felt it was an inaccurate portrayal of our meeting and that he did feel like this is needed. A few friends and I submitted a formal letter to the Board of Selectmen to create a committee like this and it was signed by several other Shrewsbury residents. After a few back and forths, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force was set up” and it was stated that this had been under discussion among the BoS.

Another participant shared that they “have questioned some of the actions of our elected officials around issues of DEI including the exclusion from the DEI task force of the community member who had the initial idea for the creation of such a committee before the death of George Floyd and was very involved in the letter that was drafted to the Board of Selectmen requesting that such a task force be formed...[this] seemed like a systemic block to progress”.

A participant shared that some “years ago a Muslim man was running for a position in town. A very hateful anti-Muslim mailing insulting this man was left in people's mailboxes. My relative received one in

his mailbox and gave it to me. I was horrified. I took a picture of it and posted in on one of the community Facebook groups to alert people to this awful thing and to state that there was no room for anti-Muslim hate in our community. Instead of people agreeing with me, I was attacked. I was accused of creating the mailing myself for attention and to stir up trouble. Further the police were called on me. I received a call from SPD at my place of employment saying they were calling to investigate the incident. Luckily the officer who called was someone who knew a member of my family and was able to recognize I was an honest person with integrity in this community. If it wasn't for that who knows what else would have come from the attempt to villainize me for standing up to anti Muslim hate in our community. It was a very disheartening experience. Rather than accept the fact that we have bigot in our community they villainize the person who speaks out against hate”.

Employment

One participant shared that they had several times applied to the Shrewsbury Public Schools for *** position but were refused repeatedly. Once given the opportunity the participant shared that they had performed really well but the supervisor refused to acknowledge them even when all their peers were very supportive and appreciative of that work. As another similar position opened up in SPS for which this person would have been a good fit, they received a phone call from the supervisor telling them they should not apply because they didn't have a chance. Another participant shared their experience as a black person. They had applied for work at *local place* and “during the interview the older white lady who was interviewing me for the position was convinced I had dropped out of high school” and therefore applied to a full-time summer position. “I kept reassuring her I was just on summer break, and she kept coaxing me to tell her "truth," and telling me I shouldn't drop out of high school. It was extremely uncomfortable”.

Public Safety

Another Resident in Town shares her experiences with Shrewsbury Police from a few years ago: She was going through a rough patch in her life: her daughter had recently been raped in college and her niece had also been raped by someone in their close circle. She was feeling overloaded and so she called her best friend to vent. The friend came over. She was extremely upset and told the friend “I just can't do it anymore” which freaked the friend out. The friend said she was going to call 911. She works at a hospital and didn't feel like she needed that support, she was just overloaded but the friend called anyway. She is now more agitated because her friend called. The police arrive and she is on the floor kind of covered in the corner trying to regroup. They charge her, guns drawn and stand over her 5'1” self. She is terrified. She is crying and asking them to back off. They don't. They continue to be verbally aggressive. Instead, they pull her to her feet and one says to the other, “yeah. She's definitely crazy” and they call an ambulance. She is loaded into the ambulance. They will not allow her friend to go with her because they cite the fact that she is “dangerous” and may hurt her friend. The friend is now very upset because what she thought would be helpful, clearly led to an aggressive response by police. She gets to UMass where she knows all the ER personnel and the psychologist on call was like, “what are you doing here?”. She explains how she was upset, called her friend who overreacted, etc. The friend had followed the ambulance but they would not let her in to see her. She is out in an hour but has her entire neighborhood now wondering what happened, why were the police at her house, etc. She is mortified but begins to reflect. She is now also furious. She will not call the police for anything for

over a year because she was so traumatized by their response and how they had 0 compassion or any attempt to understand or deescalate the situation. She started to wonder what would have happened if she was not a white, upper-class person from a fancy neighborhood. She said she felt she needed to tell this story because this is what the goal of “defund the police” is all about: having someone who is trained respond to this type of call vs. officers who respond aggressively and call people crazy. It happened 10 years ago and just re-telling the story I could hear how she is still traumatized.”

A participant noted that they were “driving back to campus with a friend who had a suspended license due to outstanding tickets. We get pulled over, no reason given. We were not speeding or driving recklessly. There were no broken taillights. He was a Black man with a head full of dreadlocks. Obviously, it did not end well for him because he was driving with a suspended license. However, I never would have expected Shrewsbury Police officers to speak to me the way they did. After they had placed him in the squad car they asked where we were going. I said back to (**college). To this the officer snapped at me, "How the HELL did YOU get into (** college)?!"

Limitations/Challenges

The major barrier was that we could not provide anonymity and most people (>62% even of the participants we got) requested that. People were afraid to come forward and suffer some sort of backlash or retaliation. Committee members worked to keep that confidentiality in the stories attached. Lack of the ability to be face to face to collect stories definitely affected our ability to hold listening sessions. We observed citizen behavior on the unofficial Facebook pages that was racist, hurtful, showed age bias and lack of respect when a healthy dialogue was attempted such as CRT and The Colonial mascot. This behavior holds people back from sharing in any forum that may be publicized. We were disappointed in even our personal networks where we know there have been incidents, that people would not take the time to share in this forum.

Conclusion

Until the community responds in a way that shows we will not tolerate personal attacks due to difference of opinion or background, micro and macro aggressions will continue.

We recommend ways to educate each other on our differences like more public festivals that are rooted in a specific culture, connections of public employees with the community at large to see each other as people vs position, and events like the diversity fair that affords opportunities to share food, music, and dress of our homelands.

A public space where meaningful interactions can occur is critical to creating an opportunity to listen. Listening provides understanding to ensure lasting change.

Shrewsbury DEI Task Force *Survey Subcommittee*

Summary

To obtain a sense of how residents feel regarding DE&I in Shrewsbury, a Survey Committee was established on May 10, 2021. The results would serve to inform the recommendations of the DEI Task Force as to improve the inclusive culture in Shrewsbury. The survey focused on Housing, Education, Health, Safety, and Employment and encompassed all marginalized groups including, but not limited to, race, religion, LGBTQ+, disability, age, and gender.

The survey was conducted via Survey Monkey with paper copies being made available to residents at the Senior Center, Town Hall, and the Public Library. It was conducted from June 21 to July 30, 2021. There were 204 online responses, seven print responses.

Results

- Primary response group: 41-70 years
- Preferred communication tools: Online Social platforms & Community groups
- Top category of respondents by Race & Origin: White (72.1%)
- 57.9% of respondents either faced or observed bias or discrimination in our schools
- Top two categories of bias and discrimination were Racial, Ethnic or Cultural and Political choice
- 83.9% of respondents did not report the incident related to bias or discrimination
- 45.6% of respondents have not seen or experienced bias or discrimination

Recommendations

1. Set up a committee on Diversity which can work on addressing issues related to bias, discrimination, and other issues.
2. The committee should run a survey, on a yearly basis using the results of this survey as a baseline. The survey can be used to gauge issues that residents face.

Glossary and Acronyms

Commonly Used Terms and Concepts

- **Belonging:** close or intimate relationship (Merriam-Webster)
- **Bias:** an inclination of temperament or outlook, especially a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment (Merriam-Webster)
- **BIPOC:** Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color
- **DEIB:** Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- **Differentiated Training/Differentiate Instruction:** in education, simply, differentiation, is a framework or philosophy for effective teaching that involves providing all students within their diverse classroom community of learners a range of different avenues for understanding new information (often in the same classroom) in terms of: acquiring content; processing, constructing, or making sense of ideas; and developing teaching materials and assessment measures so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in their ability. (Wiki)
- **Diversity:** the condition of having or being composed of differing elements: VARIETY, especially the inclusion of people of different races, cultures, etc. in a group or organization (Merriam-Webster)
- **English Language Learners:** term used in some English-speaking countries such as the US and Canada to describe a person who is learning the English language and has a native language that is not English (Merriam-Webster)
- **Equity:** fairness or justice in the way people are treated (Merriam-Webster)
- **Implicit Bias:** the pre-reflective attribution of particular qualities by an individual to a member of some social out group. (Wiki)
- **Inclusion:** the act or practice of including and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (as because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability) (Merriam-Webster)
- **Professional Development:** learning to earn or maintain professional credentials such as academic degrees to formal coursework, attending conferences, and informal learning opportunities situated in practice (Wiki)
- **Racism:** a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race (Merriam-Webster)
- **SPS:** Shrewsbury Public Schools
- **Systemic Racism:** a term that refers to a form of racism that is embedded in the laws and regulations of a society or an organization (Wiki)
- **White Supremacy:** the belief that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races (Merriam-Webster)

Appendix

Resources used by Subcommittees for Research

Employment Subcommittee

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/overview-of-types-of-discrimination-in-massachusetts>

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/shrewsburytownworcestercountymassachusetts/PST040219>

Education Subcommittee

https://go.panoramaed.com/equity-inclusion-survey-guide-edweek-summit?utm_medium=email&hsmi=84994524&hsenc=p2ANqtz-86ws-Xjo8LQoOiLQCTO1EzZyAsqaA0eJs40WL1A593AP5hIL I BAJndgjAVbYWIKwIHV&utm_content=84994524&utm_source=hs_email

https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/15-questions-to-investigate-equity?utm_medium=email&hsmi=84994524&hsenc=p2ANqtz--rE-rMSJ7f1CGZVIDbYPRN3GOwxRTkcWPfaFawW3kl-oKauBuYYcsQAC6GptsRWFia4ah9&utm_content=84994524&utm_source=hs_email

Healthcare Subcommittee

- Northboro and Westboro have successful food pantries which are available to obtain dairy, meat, and staples. In Northboro there is a refrigerator and shelving at their pantry.
- St. Ann's Parish receives donations of food from Panera Bread and Trader Joe's. The food bank also provides groceries.
- At St. Ann's once a month there is meat and dairy available. They keep no demographic information. No one is turned away. If there is not enough food, gift cards are given out. There is a need for volunteers who are able to assist with pick up and distribution of food.
- At one of the schools in town over 32% of the students are receiving free lunch. What food is available to them at home is questionable. <https://www.storymaps.arcgis.com>
- Hannah Kane forwarded information about legislative efforts to alleviate food insecurity. This information can be found at <https://www.mafoodsysteemcaus.com>
- SEALs program <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/seals>
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-public-health>
- Center for Disease Control <https://cdc.gov>

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Resources for Residents of Shrewsbury Webpage

Resources for the proposed DEI webpage on the Shrewsbury Town official website

Below are some resources we would like to see on the proposed webpage. We offer this as a starting point, and envision the webpage to be an evolving resource for residents to find information on an range of DEI topics, including but not limited to LGBTQ+, Ability, and Cultural areas.

Education Subcommittee

Anti-Racism Daily. Reclamation Ventures LLC. <https://antiracismdaily.com/>

Center for Anti Racist Education. <https://antiracistfuture.org/>

Eakins, Sheldon. Leading Equity Center. <https://www.leadingequitycenter.com/>

Gorski, Paul, and Seema, Pothini. *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education*. Routledge, 2018.

Guide to Diversifying Faculty Searches. Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity. Brown University. brown.edu/go/equity_and_diversity

Learning for Justice. [Learningforjustice.org](https://learningforjustice.org).

Massachusetts Department of Education. *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policies and Practices at DESE*. <https://www.doe.mass.edu/csi/dei.html>.

Teach Massachusetts. <https://www.doe.mass.edu/teach/>

Paraprofessional Teacher Prep Grant Program. <https://www.mass.edu/osfa/programs/teacherprep.asp>

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Everyday Antiracism Getting Real About Race in Schools. The New Press. 2008.

Housing Subcommittee

All resources can be found in the Housing Subcommittee Report on pages 17-19

Storytellers Subcommittee

Job Accommodations Network. <https://askjan.org/>

PFLAG organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people, their parents and families, and allies. <https://pflag.org/>