

Equity and Inclusion Council Minutes
Wednesday, February 17, 2021, 6:00 pm- 7:30 pm

[Click here to access Presentation Slides](#)

I. Welcome

Welcome to the members of the PHS Embrace Diversity

Welcome back members of the Tribury Rotary Club

II. Celebrations: Lifting Up Recent Examples of Work

- Dr. Erin Birden: 6th / 7th graders at RMS recently researched profiles of Abolitionists in Library Media Class, shared as part of Black History Month, integrating concepts of library media with history; Spotlight student work.
- Rabbi Eric Polokoff: Monsignor Joseph Donnelly of Sacred Heart Church, Imam Gazmend Aga of the Albanian American Muslim Community and Rabbi Eric Polokoff of B'nai Israel recently spoke at special retreat sharing thoughts on racism from the perspective of Judaism, Christianity and Islam

III. Updates from the Last Meeting

- National School Boards Association (NSBA) Equity Online Symposium - Attended by Heather Rodgers, Region 15 Board of Education Member. The event was attended by 1000s of leaders committed to educational equity; Shared inspirational story of keynote speaker and the impact and important role of teachers in students' lives and importance of cultural responsiveness. Author of the book: Miseducated: A Memoir, by Brandon Fleming
- Middle Schools - Southbury Middlebury Acting Responsibly Together (S.M.A.R.T.): SMART recently sent out information and resources for all Region 15 middle school families regarding (describe what was included?)
- Student Work: Pomperaug High School Teachers Mike Syrotiak and Stacey Clark: Shared recent class projects where students selected a topic of their choice and presented their information to an authentic audience, "Take a piece of course that resonated with them" in their Conversations on Race and Human Rights work. Projects included:
 - Illustration and creation of a Children's Book to share with 2nd grade class - importance and value of food traditions; Requested a copy for each elementary school.
 - Spoke to guidance counselors on Education and equality and reviewed strategic school profiles
 - Met with teachers to discuss untold / lesser known history stories to be added to the curriculum; including Claudette Colvin; "One seed of positivity can make create a difference" - new mural to be painted outside of classroom.
 - Shared a story with a sibling's 2nd grade class via a Kahoot game - talking about being a new kid in school and being accepted.
 - Created a board game on the American healthcare system and compared it to other healthcare systems around the world; led a discussion about whether or not healthcare should be considered a human right or an individual responsibility
 - Slideshow presentation about the history of LGBTQ rights movements in the US - history and current challenges
 - Gender inequality in education presented to PHS Assist. Principals

- Southbury Reads Together is now Tribury Reads Together - Barbara Mechler: Outreach through the Tribury Rotary facilitated the change to broaden the group to include Woodbury and the name to Tribury Reads Together; The mission is to bring our community together through reading and discussing books; group selects a theme and books that go along with it; currently seeking partnerships with groups for funding. Press releases to be shared soon.
- SMART:
 - Offering a free QPR Suicide Prevention Program; Looking to do first training for Region 15 staff and additional trainings to the community. Will share additional information when available.
 - May is Manners Month - Elementary schools will be putting together information about different 'manners' that students will have input on.
 - ADL / Ally Training - Michael J. Bernardi - ADL facilitated Becoming an Ally Training remotely at RMS recently; 24 - 6th and 7th grade students - were trained to help students respond to address behaviors, comments, and to facilitate difficult conversations; and how do you respond when you can't respond immediately to situations. Follow up opportunities will be available. Memorial Middle School has been rescheduled for Feb 25th.
- Sample of Recent Work with Region 15 Teachers- Erin Birden
African Proverbs: Grade 5 English Language Arts Collaboration with Dr. Sue Shaw; Shared the planning and forethought done to teach lessons embedded into the English Language Arts and Social Justice Teaching standards through using African Proverbs in the book Home of the Brave, by Katherine Applegate.

IV. Small group breakout room discussion:

- When looking to hire someone to work in Region 15, what qualities and/or characteristics should this person possess? Through the lens of equity.

IV. Review Group Discussions steps for groups

Share notes with Jessica.Clark@Region15.org; Group notes will be shared with administrators and other groups to continue to gather data regarding "What is a Portrait of a Candidate"

Reports from individual group discussions can be found below.

V. Reminder of future meetings: 6-7:30 pm

Tuesday, March 16

Wednesday, April 21

Wednesday, May 19