

**Equity & Inclusion Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, May 19, 2021**  
**6:00-7:30pm**

**Celebrations!**

**Canciones de la maestra (Songs by the Teacher):** Yarel Marshall's (E&I Council Member) Radio Program premiered on WERB Radio 5/15/21. The program is available each Saturday, and is replayed throughout the week leading up to the next episode. Show features Spanish music, provides personal background about the music, connecting individuals who enjoy the music while explaining the histories of the songs, ways in which place played a role in the music and how songs are interconnected. You can listen here: <https://werbradio.com/listen-now/>

**Equity in Mathematics: The Mathematicians Project in Region 15** is an instructional series focused on building positive math identities and understanding who mathematicians are and how they unlock the world. Shared a video compilation that involved a collaboration of 11 classes in Grades 2-4 in all elementary schools across Region 15 (R15), involving classroom teachers, students, families, R15 math coach, R15 instructional technology coach, and the Teacher in Residence for Diversity and Cultural Competency. School leaders council of math - has asked for the video to show different math leaders and districts the collaborative work.

The video can be viewed here and is available on our website:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Re\\_two-Q44WkKdY2kPxURh2Y9sGVq3nA/view?ts=6092e958](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Re_two-Q44WkKdY2kPxURh2Y9sGVq3nA/view?ts=6092e958)

**Establishment of LGBTQIA+ Working Group, Carrie Chiappetta, Erin Birden and Jen Labriola (Region 15 Parent)**

LGBTQIA+ Acronym: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, (questioning), intersex, asexual, and agender, ally, + = 2-spirit, pansexual, etc.

Shared the purpose of the LGBTQIA+ Working Group and the 2019 state snapshot of school climate for LGBTQIA+ Students in Connecticut in the GLSEN.

The purpose of the group is to build an awareness, to educate, to train and to support LGBTQIA+ students; to ensure that R15 and the communities of Middlebury & Southbury address the needs of its LGBTQIA+ youth at all levels through:

- *Support* of educators, families, students and allies in a welcoming and safe environment for students
- *A Curriculum* that is inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ experience and events
- *Policies* for school, district, and community organizations (harrassment, bullying, non discrimination, accessibility); and
- *Community* Support (both school and broader communities) of LGBTQIA+ individuals and Gay Straight Alliances (GSA).

The working group will begin the process of bolstering and extending supports for youth and families throughout the Region, supporting educators, and staff training and tools. Emphasizing the need for school and community support. Will begin planning meetings over the summer. Currently looking for individuals to be involved, who want to learn more and will help promote understanding and compassion.

If you are interested in participating, or you know someone who would like to participate please email: Erin Birden ([ebirden@region15.org](mailto:ebirden@region15.org)), Carrie Chiappetta ([cchiappetta@region15.org](mailto:cchiappetta@region15.org)) or Jen Labriola ([jen@thinkinsideout.com](mailto:jen@thinkinsideout.com)). Please reach out to others who may be interested.

### **R15 Possible Interview Questions for Teachers, Paraprofessionals, etc.**

The Council broke up into smaller groups to review the questions that were still not decided upon.

### **Update on Work in the Region**

- **Teacher Residency Program:** Carrie Chiappetta shared that there will be two teachers joining Region 15 next year through the CT Teacher Residency Program (CT TRP). This is an alternate route to elementary certification focused on increasing teachers of color across the State of Connecticut. Resident candidates will be enrolled in rigorous coursework for 18 months and serve in a paid residence position in a mentor teacher's classroom for the school year. Region 15 teachers will serve as mentors. (UPDATE: Region 15 was just made aware that currently we will have 1 Teacher Resident and CT TRP will work to find the Region a second Resident)
- **Tribury Reads Update:** Erin Birden shared that an email has been sent to 82 registrants in the community 72 adults / 10 youth participants. Local librarians from Southbury and Woodbury are assisting with getting copies. Please contact them if you need a copy of the book. Discussion dates are 6/26 and 6/27 with options in-person or via zoom. Currently working on the facilitator guide and expect to have groups of 10 individuals in each book group.
- **Update on the Administrator Questions:**  
Carrie Chiappetta shared that questions previously reviewed in the E&I council were used in the interview process for the Pomperaug Elementary School Principal and are currently being used in the interview process for the Assistant Principal position at LMES. Questions were used in various rounds as well as added to the software program in the initial application process, emphasizing the importance and value Region 15 places on equity and inclusion.

- **Embrace Diversity Meeting:** Mike Syrotiak shared that the high school students meet once per month and student leaders have been meeting extra time per month to plan. Meetings are student directed and discussions are often about their experience and their feelings, positive/negative feelings regarding classroom experiences. Dr. Chiappetta recently attended to hear their thoughts. They are planning a book club and details to be shared.
- **Kindergarten Lesson on Puerto Rico:** Erin shared a collaborative lesson shared with kindergarteners across Region 15 with Yamira Raimundi, R15 parent and secretary to Assistant Principal at PHS, about Puerto Rico and her experience on the island. Included a read aloud with each class and students creating their own buildings in the style of Old San Juan while listening to salsa music. Remark on leveraging the experiences and knowledge from within our school community. Shared a brief video of the lesson.
- **The Day You Begin, by Jaqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafayl Lopez:** A lesson shared with multiple classrooms throughout the year, most recently two kindergartens at MES and LMES . Throughout the book the symbolism of a ruler is used to represent measuring ourselves against each other. Following the lesson the students made flowers (a second significant theme in the book) and shared different aspects of their identity to honor their own diversity - their similarities and differences.
- **PHS US History/4th grade classes: Children's Book:** Students in the US History Classes taught by Mrs. Clark and Ms. Saraiva, shared how students have been studying the Civil Rights Movement. Through the development of a collaborative project with Erin Birden, the students were tasked with creating a book that will help to educate the next generation about one individual from this movement. Their assignment was as follows: The Civil Rights Movement was largely a grassroots movement where individuals used their power to push and create change. Although most are aware of larger figures there were countless others whose stories are not always told. Tell the story of one such individual. Create a children's book that is aimed at an elementary school audience to teach children about one figure from the Civil Rights Movements of the 1950s & 1960s. The students shared their books with students in the 4th grade classes from across the district.

### **Moving Forward: Action Plan**

Insert Slide for next year

- The Equity & Inclusion Council Action Plan was on the agenda for review and to note 2020-21 school year accomplishments. Unfortunately there was not time to complete the review, but that questions were posed for next school year.
  - Questions included:

- COSMIC to start up again?
- Development of Affinity Groups for Staff/Adults/Students?
- Updating of Resources on website?
- R15 Inclusivity & Religion Guide
- Revision of plan?
  - Are there other action steps that should be added to the plan?
- Dates for next year and meeting dates will be shared.

Thank you for everyone's support and efforts towards equity and inclusion in our community. Please contact if you want to work on something or other ideas to incorporate into the Equity & Inclusion Council.