

Equity Meeting

Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, February 2nd

6:04 PM Meeting called to order.
Committee members present: Mariam Khan, Kevin Shea, Dr. David Asbery

Mariam Khan: Welcome. Excited for this committee to infuse community, student, and teacher voices into decision making. In the spirit of equity and taking/making space, let us have everyone limit themselves from 3-5 minutes.

No additions to the agenda.

No public comments on the information items.

Information Item Order Change: Moving HR Report on hiring and staff diversity per HR Director request.

Information Item 1: HR Report on hiring and staff diversity

Gary Highsmith: Revisit draft of minority teacher plan. Going back to the Personnel Committee, then the Equity Committee in the March meeting, and finally back to the broader BOE. Presented a draft of vision statement and theory of change and asked for committee feedback.

David Asbery: On minority teacher recruitment—what do we have posted in the news outlet?

Gary Highsmith: Vision statement discussed tonight, details on implementation have to be fleshed out in Personnel. Starting recruitment earlier in the year, and flyers will be shown before they go out.

Katie Kieley: On vision statement—something about diverse staff adding their voice and empowering new teachers of color should be added.

Gary Highsmith: This will be represented later in the report but can be explicitly stated earlier.

Chris Melillo: Recruitment is more than having people of color—retention and culture of support are also crucial to have in this vision statement.

Loretha Felton: Served on committee developing this vision. Had specific frameworks to work with during training, and could not be exhaustive in length. Culture and voice will be discussed later in the document.

David Asbery: Is this being run through the legal team?

Gary Highsmith: Yes.

Mariam Khan: When was this committee put together and when did the vision drafting statement begin?

Gary Highsmith: Done over 4 months last year. 6 sessions. Directly adapted from the state template.

Mariam Khan: Recognizing word limits, perhaps adding “empowered” right after diverse: “diverse, empowered teaching staff.” Would like to see student representation on the vision drafting committee.

6:30 PM

Information Item 2: HDAC (Hamden Diversity Advisory Council) Report

Mariam Khan: HDAC began in response to integration and 3R but has evolved to take on much more including the pandemic, universal preschool, controlled choice. Uniquely situated to offer a radically different, community-led framework for the most difficult issues our school system faces.

Jody Goeler: 3R Plan and Hamden Diversity Advisory Council (HDAC) work with one another. Key elements: involves balancing integrating schools; decisions about keeping schools open/closed; HDAC Moving Forward report produced last year; 2 chief task forces on Universal Preschool and Controlled Choice.

Chris Melillo: Sharing slides with updates on preschool task force:

PreK Taskforce

- Karlen Meinsen – Co Chair Parent
- Chris Melillo – Co Chair Assistant Superintendent
- LuAnn Gallicchio – Director of Adult Education and Early Childhood
- Allison Balsion- HPS Preschool Teacher Helen Street
- Dr. Michael Lorenzo – Principal Helen Street
- Judy Antignani – Coordinator of Alice Peck Early Learning Center
- Stacie D’Antonio – Principal Ridge Hill
- Tricia Godfrey – HPYC Coordinator
- Benjamin Dix – Director of Special Education
- Jisel Cordero – Director of Hamden Readiness Program
- Deborah Kras – Speech and Language Clinician Bear Path
- Nancy Carangelo – Special Education Teacher Alice Peck
- Dorian Bauknecht – Kindergarten Teacher Spring Glen

Current Taskforce members meet monthly on the second Wednesday of every month.

The slide features a light blue background with a list of names and roles. At the bottom, there is an illustration of a man and a woman walking with a child, and a dog running in the distance.

Preschool Task Force members

Goal


- **Investigate and develop a plan to implement affordable preschool opportunities for all Hamden residents.**

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Preschool Task Force goals

Objectives

- Develop trust and a working relationship amongst the Taskforce members
- Understand the current School Readiness Program (i.e. funding, staffing, facilities, operations).
- Create an action plan or roadmap that can be used to increase preschool access for Hamden families



Preschool Task Force goals

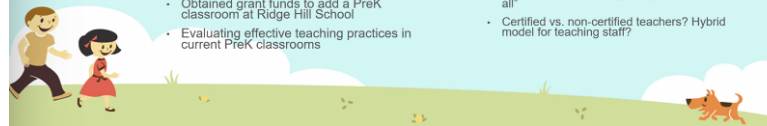
Update

Successes:

- Task force meets monthly
- Co-chair Meinsen receives weekly professional coaching sessions
- Trusting relationships formed amongst all members
- Visited PreK classrooms to observe teachers and students and understand the program
- Letter writing campaign to State Delegation in order to support preschool slots and/or facilities
- Began to develop an action plan to help organize the work
- Obtained grant funds to add a PreK classroom at Ridge Hill School
- Evaluating effective teaching practices in current PreK classrooms

Obstacles:

- Funding for programs
- Facilities necessary for (National Association for The Education of Young Children) NAEYC accreditation
- Supply chain and personnel issues delaying Ridge Hill PreK opening
- Dilemma between building a program and creating a vacuum for small business owners
- Closely tied to 3R project goals
- How to remain engaged when engaged in this work when there is "holding pattern" environment
- Decisions about how we implement: hybrid (10 month and 12 month options) or "one size fits all"
- Certified vs. non-certified teachers? Hybrid model for teaching staff?



Preschool Task Force updates and obstacles

Katie Kiely: What questions do Board members have about controlled choice or HDAC broadly?

David Asbery: Where is money coming from and are grants being looked at?

Katie Kiely: In response to funding—looking into this with Bridges Collaborative, national organization to work with other school districts addressing similar issues. What do you imagine the Board's role to be?

David Asbery: Perhaps BOE members can be invited to meetings? Public can be more involved with school or town hall workshops.

Mariam Khan: Just for some clarification, BOE members were invited to attend HDAC meetings throughout its development. Community outreach has been stunted by Covid-19 but Loretha can speak more to that.

Loretha Felton: Report was presented to the Legislative Council. Currently working on transparency and inclusivity, and community outreach.

Karlen Meinsen: To David's point—meeting in schools could make HDAC more accessible to the community.

David Asbery: Updates about HDAC should be sent to the mayor for talking points and articles highlighting successes. Need preschool leaders, small businesses here as partners.

Katie Kiely: Coming back to controlled choice. May not be overwhelmingly popular, need to be upfront immediately about what needs to happen and why all students need access. Community should not only be informed but able to make an impact.

Karlen Meinsen: Agrees with David on press highlights. Story was loved but reporters are looking for events to report on.

Mariam Khan: Media is important, but important to caution against sensationalizing the work. The dynamic changes when the work is being done for the press as regards to keeping the community empowered and informed, which is our goal. As a reminder: appreciate hearing from voices that haven't been heard and being sensitive to the 3-5 minute windows.

Kevin Shea: Currently soaking all of this information in and will address questions later on.

David Asbery: A podcast could also invite younger people into this.

7:35 PM

Information Item 3: Technology Report

Jody: More formal report on technology will be available to Board of Education soon.

Mariam Khan: Want to learn more about how the digital divide is being combated in HPS. Important to involve students: have lots of knowledge on technology.

David Asbery: Are there hotspots for students to allow them to get their work done?

Jody Goeler: Was during pandemic, more for gain of service providers than community. Work with individual families to ensure access.

7:37 PM

TABLED: Information Item 4: LGBTQIA+ Report

Chris Melillo: Working with groups such as GLSEN but will table to allow for Amanda Fercucci to share updates.

7:41 PM

Meeting adjourned. *Motion: David Asbery, Second: Kevin Shea*