

Social/Racial Justice Committee Meeting Minutes November 14, 2022

Attending: Denise Webster, Jan Sander, Jeff Hunsberger, Erik Remmers, Betzi Goodman, Bethann Pirie, Jennifer Hulse

Called to order: 5:00pm

Maria was not able to attend for updates, so Denise opened the floor to questions or concerns of the board. Jeff asked how the schools are doing, what the climate is like?

Betsy stated their biggest issue has been staff getting COVID and students not getting sick, so teachers having to take up the slack (of absent teachers). One day they had 8 staff and only 2 kids out! Also they had Abnacki representative Brenda Gagne there to speak to staff. She stated it was very emotional and hard to hear, but important for them to know.

Per Bethann, we are in a much better place, but we are not perfect. Students would say the halls are feeling safer this year. Jeff pointed out that this year's freshman did not get to finish 7th grade or have 8th grade in school, and BethAnn replied that they did not get that tight team teaching that is done in middle level. Bethann also stated they have more systems in place now to address a lot of those issues. The group they had that were all vaping, it took a year to get them on track and many are on track for success in HS.

Jeff asked if they do any surveys to track what the kids are into, both outside activities and socially. Bethann states they do some informal surveys with the kids.

Jeff also asked about drop-out rates. Bethann stated that they did lose a lot last year, but we have gotten some of them back, and that they are all working on a graduation track.

Erik states that Tech Center is doing great, kids are engaged & teachers are engaged. Enrollment is slightly down, but they are getting a lot more applications for next year. They opened the application process earlier this year.

Bethann states one thing she and staff are noting is students have not gotten their resiliency back, when things get tough they quit easier.

Jeff stated he is trying to watch the ebb and flow in all the different systems to see what is in place and what needs help.

Jen, speaking for special educators, said they are having staffing issues, losing another on Nov 25th. We are down multiple positions in multiple campuses. We have 324 Spec kids, up slightly since pre-COVID. All students except for pre-K get some daily supports 5 days/week, Eden gets 4 days/week. Some are contracted out like Waterville has an online contracted speech provider. Some SPEC are virtual. Jeff asked if community provided more support what grades would be needed most. She stated it is more social/behavior need more support. We have the highest population in early learning, Pre-K, ten with specific learning disabilities, then social/behavioral. Kids are coming in more dysregulated than ever before.

Betzi stated that kids coming in from other systems (for Kindergarten) we don't know what their needs are, and the transitions can be more difficult. We need to know these kids better. Jeff suggested that schools get CIS more involved in their process.

Social/Racial Justice Committee Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2022

Bethann spoke about an upcoming program, "Hooked," that will address drug additions, but also cell phone and social media usage.

Jeff stated that he wants all staff to know that they are supported, and if there is anything the community can do to please let him know!

Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm