

# CAC DEI COMMITTEE MINUTES

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October 5, 2022

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## In Attendance

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Lolly Bentch, Christina Garber, Betsy Gayner, Debbie Lawrence, Adrian Murray, David Pettegrew, Autumn Reely, Teresa Smith, Tanisha Young, Melanie Gurgiolo

By Zoom: Jonathan Casey, CM, Karen Mallah

Absent: Jessica Henderson Regan, Emily Rudy, Dan Serfass

By SLACK: Jonathan Casey, Tiena Tran

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## Welcome

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Adrian Murray called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm and welcomed everyone. He reviewed the current cultural celebrations. Yom Kippur is today, Indigenous Peoples' Day is October 10<sup>th</sup>, Diwali is October 24<sup>th</sup> and the Hispanic Heritage Month runs from 15 September through 15 October..

Debbie Lawrence read the FERPA statement.

Shortly after starting the meeting, it was noted that participants by zoom did not have audio. Despite a lot of effort to restore it, it could not be fixed. The participants on Zoom via a written message on Zoom chat were given the opportunity to join us in the administrative meeting room. David Pettegrew started posting on SLACK the ongoing discussion to keep CAC for DEI members who were on zoom up to date and they were able to add to our discussion.

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## Approval of Agenda

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Adrian asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was approved.

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## Approval of September Meeting Minutes

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Adrian made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. Hearing no changes, the meeting minutes were approved.

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## Welcome new Committee Member

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Adrian gave a warm welcome to our new committee member, Tiena Tran. Unfortunately, Tiena was not able to join us in person but was able to join in on SLACK.

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## Update on Community Meet and Greet

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1. **Cornerstone Meet- Up:** Debbie reported the meet and greet went very well. There were 5 CAC for DEI members, 3 school board members, the Lion Foundation Director and a continual trickle of community members. There were great, meaningful, thought-provoking conversations. School board members were very supportive of our initiatives and encouraged us not to get discouraged that things move slowly.

David, Teresa and Tanisha all agreed the event was very positive. There were no issues or complaints voiced at the event.

Kelly Falck, the Director of the Lion Foundation, expressed their willingness to partner with us. Discussion about upcoming ski club trip and how they might be able to provide grants to students that need financial assistance and or other clubs and activities.

There was discussion about what data the school collects that will help us learn more about our students and community. How could we use that data to assist in our initiatives?

Debbie mentioned having another meet and greet, perhaps in the evening at the library to continue the discussion. She would like to have a teacher meet and greet too. For future events, it was asked if the principals would be willing to promote the event as well.

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## Update on Proposed CAC for DEI Initiatives

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1. **Extra-Curricular Clubs:** Autumn shared a list of extracurricular clubs and activities. The extracurricular clubs meet before, during or after school during non-academic times. The activity groups are mentoring groups that meet 6 times/year during academic time. Mrs. Delong will be presenting more detailed information about these items at the school board meeting on Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup>.

We have some homeless students. How do we engage or help them? Autumn stated she has oversight of the homeless students. The school district does not employ a social worker but contracts one at no cost to the district to work with the students in K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The guidance counselors work with the students in 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. These families are referred to New Hope Ministries.

2. **MLK Day:** We as a committee would like to facilitate a day of service and instill within the students that this is "not a day off, but a day of service".

Adrian shared on SLACK a link for the 2023 Central PA MLK Day of Service. He asked that we review the list and see if any appeal to us. Lolly shared that these events fill up quickly.

Discussion about our committee planning our own day of service with a couple of activities for families and students to choose from.

Lolly and Tanisha will contact New Hope Ministries to see what needs we could assist with. We may invite Eric Soddors from New Hope to our next meeting to discuss with the committee.

Tanisha will reach out to the library and see if there are any needs.

Borough Hall might have some needs too.

The West Shore Baptist Church on N. 21<sup>st</sup> St has a clothing closet. It was mentioned that they may need help organizing all their items they have stored.

Students could make cards for Caitilin Smiles organization and or nursing homes in the area.

Working with animal or homeless shelters

Jonathan asked that we make decisions on activities soon so we can move forward with the approval process. He also mentioned the americorps.gov site for ideas.

Discussion took place about how to promote the event. There was a suggestion to announce and have signups in the schools. Autumn will check on liability issues, permission and clearances needed. We must keep in mind the activities we select and the age appropriateness for the students.

David reminded us of our Mission statement in regards to the service activity which is to "advise on strategies, initiatives, and events that promote the health, welfare and success of students".

**3. Club Catering to Neurodiverse Students:** Lolly reviewed the club's overview. The goal is to facilitate social interactions and friendships amongst neurodiverse students in MS/HS.

Lolly will work on renaming the club, perhaps finding an acronym for FRIENDS

Autumn met with Mrs. Delong and was told we could run this as a club and it could be run by parent volunteers with no teacher needed. Autumn will discuss the need for permission slips.

This will be an inclusive club for any students, but with teachers and counselors identifying and inviting neurodiverse students or those that struggle socially. Autumn stated in grades 6 to 12, there were approximately 25 identified students.

It is important to have some neurotypical students participate as well. Perhaps students that are interested in pursuing the educational, medical, social work fields. The hope is that the neurotypical students will become a friendly face/support/friend to the neurodiverse students in the hallways, classrooms and cafeteria.

The MS/HS library with the carpeting is best suited to be used to help alleviate noise issues for students that are noise sensitive.

The Club would meet weekly after school from 3 to 4:30 pm to get established. Initial activities would include board games, craft area, and quiet area for socialization. Once established, we will get ideas from the students how they want to spend this time and how often they want to meet. We would like to incorporate one evening meeting a month and invite parents to participate so that they can network amongst each other. This might be held at another venue, such as the library.

Adrian discussed the Bodhana Group, a nonprofit organization that advocates the use of tabletop gaming as a directed therapeutic and clinical practice that can benefit personal growth as well as enhance social and educational services to individuals. The Executive Director is willing to meet with the CHSD leadership team to discuss how they can help educate the facilitators of the club on how to best utilize the games to benefit the social and emotional development of neurodiverse students.

Lolly, Adrian and Betsy will finalize the information needed to get this initiative placed on the agenda for the October 20<sup>th</sup> CEC meeting.

Adrian discussed the need for more training for teachers in regards to identifying neurodiverse students. Autumn explained the tiers of evaluation that are done on a monthly basis of students that teachers have identified with academic or social concerns. Interventions are put in place and after 12 weeks, another review of data is done. If no improvement, they are moved up to Tier 2 with more intensive interventions. If no improvement after 10 to 12 weeks, an evaluation is recommended. Parents are notified of every meeting and must agree to the interventions and evaluations. Overall, Autumn feels we have an excellent system in place to identify students and intervene, but agreed with Adrian that there can be improvements in identifying and accommodating neurodiverse students. Some upcoming training will include behavior, socialization and trauma informed care.

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#### Comments, Announcements, and Any Other Business

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Lolly mentioned that there is an excellent Civil Rights exhibit at the State Museum. She encourages everyone to visit.

David is interested in working on data and demographic matters related to our school district. Autumn stated the school district has several categories of data that we could have access to. She shared that the Leader in Me data is available and will be discussed with the Leadership team next week. They had a good participation rate from each building. There will be a presentation to the school board in the future. Adrian mentioned a Bright Bytes survey that was done possibly in 2019 or 2020 and wonders whether that data might be helpful to us. Discussion about what data the Borough might have that would show us the changing demographics of the Borough. Teresa will join him on the data and demographics initiative.

David would also like to develop resources for understanding complicated histories of the region. Please contact him if you would like to work with him.

Debbie was asked to attend the next Elementary PTO meeting to discuss our committee and our purpose.

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#### Adjournment

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Adrian adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm

Our next meeting is Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 pm