

**Cultural Proficiency Summer Retreat  
Sonesta Hotel, Longfellow A Foyer  
August 23, 2018**

Present: Mayor McGovern, Vice Chair Kelly, Mr. Fantini, Ms. Dexter, Ms. Bowman, Mr. Kimbrough, and Ms. Nolan

Also Present: Dr. Kenneth Salim, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Mr. James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer; Mr. Dan Monahan, CEA President

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. by Mayor McGovern; after reading the call of the meeting, he asked Dr. Salim to make introductions and set the tone for the evening. The Superintendent explained that Dr. Darnisa Amante, the founder and CEO of DEEP (Disruptive Equity Education Project), will be the facilitator for the evening and Dr. Amante has worked within the CPSD on different district levels and in a number of schools. He Then turned the rest of the meeting over to Dr. Amante.

Dr. Amante informed the assembly that this meeting is going to be intense in terms of learning how to bring equity into place. The DEEP logo was explained is an anagram for you to look at roots, flip it upside down and look at a tree. When being completely truthful with ourselves, mirrors are scary, they reveal everything both good and bad. We are required to look deep into ourselves and do internal work before we can do any external work. She is not going to put us through a guilt trip, but she will hold a mirror up. Dr. Amante stated that there is no such thing as a safe place on this topic of equity and inclusion.

Some highlights that were brought up at the end of this conversation:

- Bias begins as early as six months.
- Liberal is not Progressive
- Activism without Competence is harmful
- Average adult attention span is 20 seconds
- The foundation to being equitable is having empathy.
- The four systemic forms of racism equal the four I's
  - ✓ Internalized
  - ✓ Ideological
  - ✓ Interpersonal
  - ✓ Institutional

Dr. Amante spoke on the differences between diversity, inclusion and equity. Diversity is the same thing as equality. They both *feel* fair.

Dr. Amante shared an experience about a stranger touching her hair without permission in a restroom. She responded with I Notice, I Wonder. I notice I wonder is a standard of how we can give feedback to harmful situations. Not knowing you have done or said something wrong does not excuse the behavior.

Dr. Amante took us through the DEEP PowerPoint presentation:

A discussion followed on the following topics and concerns:

**Norms**

Be Present

Assume good intentions and take responsibility for impact

- This was hard for a Member, stating many of us like to believe we are not racist or are working toward not being racist.

Be able to express as much vulnerability as you are willing to offer

Be open to another persons' perspective

Be ready to actively listen

Expect and Respect Non-Closure

- This was hard for another Member because we cannot erase racism in one day, it cannot be a line item in the budget and then all of a sudden there is no more racism.

Confidentiality

Step Up/Step Back

Inclusion is the first time we are asking someone to give something up. Inclusion question systems of power and systems of privilege. An example is hiring. What are the practices and policies that inhibit people of color from getting jobs. The job description is written in your own image. Where are they posted? All around the city or just in an online portal? Is it only in English? If so, that sends a message. Does the application ask if English is your second language. The absence of something is still something.

Equity has two levels. The broad level is acknowledging there is more than one type of inequity. Racial equity says the darker you get the less you will have. How do we give more to the families that need it the most. Why does it matter? What are some of the cultures that live in Cambridge and the rest of the world? How do we support families, teachers and the rest of the community? Cambridge is a city of status and is not unique. The extreme differences between the have and have nots is global. Any city that is committed to making progress on this issue has their work cut out for them.

Neighborhood and zip code were suggested as other ways of keeping people marginalized. What does full potential mean? Dr. Amante stated it means if you have access to all of the resources you need, you don't experience marginalization.

Another answer to full potential that was mentioned is choice – having choices or not having choices. What barriers are in the way of pathways and racial equity? It was stated that we all need to recognize white supremacy. Some don't want to talk about racism, some talk about it but it is harmful or not getting us anywhere.

Once you allow your eyes to open to the inequity, you "stay woke" and you can never not see it again.

White supremacy is the myth that white people dominate the world. Only 12% of the world population are white people. So why are white people not the minority on a job application?

Normal is different for everyone. Schools were not designed to be equitable. They were created to sort children. To find out who would own the factories and who would work in them. Code switching has a cost of teaching our students that they are not good enough.

In our schools, our standards, curriculum and assessments are aligned to this culture of WUMCV = white upper middle class values. We do not test on cultural relevance.

Equity in practice

There was a conversation about not having to be re elected, do we really need to take the time to develop a deeper understanding of our biases and see change right away? Is it political? Do we need to take action quickly or can we take our time to solve it. The elected officials have to do it within two years, just in case they don't get re elected. The reality is that you cannot get it all done even in 30 years.

How can we tutor parents?

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The Golden Circle: They always tell you what to do, but they don't always tell you how or why.

What does proper education look like to be successful; this was the biggest problem that educators faced from parents. Actively moving kids out of classes and into classes that they thought had the right teachers. Teachers are not allowed to say they don't already know something. You are inferior if you are not expert.

It takes 3-5 months to change or transform a mindset around biases. We want to do everything, it is hard to say no.

There is some concern on how the should School Committee behave.

There was an opportunity for the assembly to express their appreciation on how this retreat went.

Appreciate that all members being present and engaged in the meeting  
Appreciate the honest sharing, setting policy with equity lens  
Appreciate Dr. Darnisa Amante leading this conversation  
Appreciate new and additional language to communicate biases and dismantling racism

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. with was a promise to continue with this series. We need to do our own mirror work before we move on to changing others.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.



Dosha Beard  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

**Documents Submitted** (on file in the School Committee office)

- ✓ Agenda
- ✓ Working Definitions: Equity and Racial Equity
- ✓ DEEP PowerPoint Presentation