

HUDSONVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DIVERSITY AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

MINUTES Administration Building, 3883 Van Buren, Hudsonville, MI 49426

September 5, 2023

4:15 PM

Committee Members Present: Abby Pater, Aimee Ditmer, Ami Taylor, Carissa Woodwyk, Doug VanderJagt, Greg Molchan, Jacob Lenhart, Jennifer Brummitt, Jennifer Dougherty, Jordan Beel, Joy Hemmes, Louise VandenHuevel, Mackenzie Stefanich, Marc Arnoys, Nate Hoekstra, Paul Raschke, Ryan Crete, Mandy Thomas, and Zach James. **Absent:** Chelsea Reed, Steve Burns **HPS Board Members Present:** Greg Chanski and Mark Davis **Minutes by:** Stephanie Fast

Facilitator Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

Committee Membership

Thomas indicated there was a vacancy on the committee created by a teacher member stepping down. Thomas stated the committee could discuss filling the vacancy. A few committee members expressed interest in filling the vacancy with another parent. Other members indicated the perspective of a current classroom teacher would be valuable, and others offered that it would make sense to proceed in filling the vacancy in the same way that other vacancies had been filled. A member expressed that they did not feel it would be an insurmountable task to help a new member get up to speed. Thomas reported that a lot of intentional time was spent filling various roles so that all perspectives, roles, and areas within the district, and it would be ideal to have another teacher fill the vacancy.

Thomas asked for further questions or comments. Hearing none, Thomas called for a vote to replace the vacancy with another teacher. There were 15 yes votes. Thomas indicated that she would move forward and follow the same process as in the past and invited the committee to send her any feedback.

Meeting Norms

Thomas passed out the meeting norms and asked the membership to form pairs and review the information for 4 minutes. After the review, Thomas asked if there were any items worthy of discussion, review, revision, or addition. Several members expressed they found the norms useful and positive in creating a safe space where meaningful dialogue could occur.

Thomas asked if everyone was comfortable with the norms and expectations. Everyone unanimously agreed that they were comfortable. Thomas reported that something said at the May meeting made a few members uncomfortable, resulting in them reaching out to a board of education member. Thomas suggested that it would be more appropriate to bring concerns back to the committee according to the meeting norms. A few members of the committee expressed discomfort that they recalled hearing another member refer to someone as having "white male privilege." The committee spent some time exploring various language and phrases that were triggering for them. Committee members also shared that they

felt it was important to lift up the norm of presuming positivity, and others commented about wanting to ensure that the group could continue to move forward in this work.

Thomas advised she would hold space for clarification moving forward and assigned the committee homework, which was to think about how members can uphold the norms or add anything that could help further discourse.

Committee Progress

Thomas asked, in reference to surveys, videos, and SOAR 5 does the committee want to continue with what it has developed or does it want to revise what had been previously put together as drafts. The group's identified problem of practice statement was reviewed:

"Discrimination and harassment based on race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation is occurring at HPS. The DAC acknowledges that instances of discrimination and harassment are not limited to these protected groups. Our laws and policies require HPS to create an anti-harassment learning environment for all. With this as our starting point, how can we better collect data, implement proactive measures, and continually monitor and improve."

VanderJagt asked if the committee had enough information to progress. Thomas indicated that the committee could decide to continue gathering additional information, or if the existing information was sufficient, the committee could move into the brainstorming solutions phase of the committee work. Thomas asked the members to spend 25 minutes reviewing the SOAR 5 surveys alone or in pairs. The members were provided with printed copies of selected sections and were given a link to the complete survey results online. The committee wondered what had happened with the survey they created. Thomas indicated it had been shared with the board but had not yet been distributed to students.

Thomas advised the committee that their work was to decide if the materials were still the recommendation of the committee. Thomas stated when the video was shown to the board in the spring, there were concerns that the video should not be shown to students immediately before the survey was taken. Thomas shared that the group had proposed a possible script to accompany the survey to provide an additional safeguard for consistent teacher delivery of the survey.

Chanski stated this will be discussed at an upcoming meeting. Chanski expressed concern about what was being asked of 3rd-5th graders and wanted time to process his thoughts. Chanski felt the board was not in support of sending the survey out and indicated that it was 10:45 p.m. and the board wanted to address the topic when they were at their best. Chanski stated that in the summary of findings the most frequently added unaided concern was about behavioral issues. Chanski suggested maybe the DAC wanted to address that.

Davis stated in the future the board would like to see the information ahead of time. Davis indicated that when reviewing SOAR 5 data what stood out to him was students not getting consequences for their behaviors. A committee member noted that in the report of the SOAR V survey one of the student questions about derogatory comments omitted the word "observed". Dr. VanderJagt indicated that he would investigate to see if the original question to students was "received or observed" or "received".

Thomas concluded the meeting by sharing that the committee's goal was to continue in the effort surrounding the group's identified problem of practice, understanding that what led this committee to exist was the knowledge of harassment of protected classes happening in our schools and the board's desire to see this group approach this problem from a new perspective. Thomas adjourned the meeting at 5:45 pm.