

OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
201 North Scoville Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee
November 13, 2018

A Culture, Climate and Behavior Committee (CCB) meeting was held on November 13, 2018. Chair Cassell called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were: Benson, Carioscio, Cassell, Daniels, Hardwicke, Harris, Hildner, Johnson, Jones, Leach, Lemke- Bell, Martire, McQueen, Moore, Pruitt-Adams, Sherman, Walksler, Weintraub, and Wilson. Also present was Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors: None

Peace Circle

Gina Harris, as the peacemaker, asked everyone to sit in the circle and to describe their feelings.

Comments included:

- 1) Whirlwind and hopeful,
- 2) Mixed because his 16-year old daughter has significant concerns and he was trying to navigate those as a parent. This is also opportunity to take this challenge on for meaningful, positive change.
- 3) Many people have their thoughts with the school and these incidents highlighted the big and systemic issues. Many people rooting for the high school.
- 4) Excited as this time has not been seen in 25 years. The marches are refreshing, and she hoped to see action from the marches from the participants and anyone who participated in the America To Me would like to see movement.
- 5) Sadness, especially for the students. Overwhelmed as a person who is supposed to be involved in decision to feel that the actions taken are not enough. While a sense of urgency was felt, apparently it is not given the feedback from community. More hopeless last week, but this week more hopeful.
- 6) Sad, exhausted, pain, hopeful, resolve for direction of school district. Proud and thankful for being able to work for this district at this time. This is the right work to be doing.
- 7) Tired, hurt, hopeful, protective. Hurt stems from outside this school community who have ascribed certain things to students, faculty and people working here. Protective of the students and proud of their actions, voices and their intentionality. Worry for them because people use them for their own purposes. Hopeful because this will pass and everyone will be better for it. Two OPRFHS students were named to FORBES 30, a writer and storyteller and an attorney.
- 8) Beat up, beat down, physically and emotionally tired. Much work to do. Children who are hurting. They can't be protected in the way everyone feels they should. Name calling should not have occurred. There is no magic wand to wave. Students know that everything in one's power is being done for them. The team is working hard and fighting with people both inside and outside the building from morning to night and it is not enough. Children are afraid to come to school. Teachers are afraid to come to work. This is not a game when parents are trusting the District and the District is trying to make sure everything is covered.

- 9) Having been absent the last week, this person feel into the gray area, but felt overwhelmed with empathy for the students to perform in an unfriendly environment. The people who this person works for are doing great work and that is not being recognized. Hopeful that things would get better.
- 10) Challenged, prideful in the work that faculty and administration and Board of Education has done to control the situation where there was no control. Society tends to repeat itself and these have come up in this person's lifetime. Raised in OP, this person felt history was repeating itself. At those times, things tend to get better. Time is needed to learn from past mistakes.
- 11) Heartbreaking, hurt and sad. This has been too real for the kids. The adults have collaborated and worked together. This person felt fortunate and hopeful. Students have come to PSS Teams to help them process. Prideful at what they will learn from this and the people they will become.
- 12) Tired, unsettled, and proud of the students and their different perspectives. Those that helped the District are blessed. We will get through this.
- 13) Felt what had happened was a good thing. Truth is a good thing. and we vary what reality is in order to make it convenient. More clarity has arisen as to where the community is and what needs to be done about it. The underbelly has come to the surface. Invigorated. It is a path for whites to know what people of color already knew. This person was waiting to hear that students trust teachers and visa versa and that the administration trusts teachers, etc. Truth is comforting.
- 14) Tired, angry, but also resilient. Resistance is felt when things are changing. This did not come out of nowhere and this person wants to work doubly hard to change it.
- 15) Inspired over the last week to see classmates find their voice, speak out, call things out, but also helplessness. For every two steps forward, one step back. Ignorant belligerent statements are being made by peers. This person hoped something like this should flip a switch. This person felt determination that was one the road to progress, but one event will not change how people treat people as human beings. Young adults have a long way to go. This person was positive and believed in the school and community, but the conversation of the past week needs to be resolved.
- 16) Surprised at last week's events. Empowerment of the students, as they are the future and hate begets hate. Hate is learned. The students are the ones that create the new generation and that is why it is so important to listen and understand. Remember, civil rights are still young. Students are being taught by those who lived during that time. FYI, holiday, on trial, every used "N" word, the moment of truth. She came from a time when that was different time. Now ...have to listen to the children and D97 meeting tonight which was talking about harassment. Surprised, because we are so smart, bright and rich. I felt like once this doc came out and it was posed to me to her - no watch it, it will cause good conversation, etc. It has caused a lot of stuff. I thought about when our dirty laundry, we want to set the bars, look how they turned things around If not, deal with it or don't come to our community. I know we can turn it around and be the trail blazers, it is changing mindsets that are centuries old and starts with our kids and they are telling others. Let the kids talk to relate why this is the place.
- 17) Impassioned, protective, and encouraged by the students and their voices. Having done peace circles, she witnessed grace, insight, and beauty. Wishful that the community could have heard the students of color and the white students who felt guilty about minimizing the issue. This person experienced solidity and what the healing could look like. Comfort and change do not exist in the same home. One of the agreements of a racial equity leader is to experience discomfort.
- 18) Compassion for the great leaders who are experiencing change and discomfort with many voices at the table. He was thinking of mob money, anger, bullying, and lack of trust.

- 19) No one seemed to care about what occurred last week. No more conversation is occurring. Shocked that something happened. Happy.
- 20) Supported. This is a long, long battle with the community. Sad and disappointed last week, but now hopeful and a fight yet to fight.
- 21) Torn. Nothing has happened previously. It was good to see some people cared.
- 22) Hopeful that the community was coming together. Happy for this conversation and the many things coming forward in order to see what the problems are.

Ms. Harris then asked the participants what a sense of urgency looked like and what does it mean to you?

- 1) Looks like listening and driving something that is not reactionary.
- 2) The Community and everyone coming together to talk about the problems that are going on. It won't happen in a week, but making steps on what it is that needs to be done. The first step is to communicate. People do not share and they all have their own perceptions. More communication.
- 3) More communication, but nothing happens after talking.
- 4) An understanding on all sides of the equation. No one understands each other. No one understands what's going on.
- 5) Community, sense of unity, trust, army of the kind, inherent with action and intentionality. Everyone takes responsibility for their part in inequity and not realizing their own part in racism. The urgency is to challenge themselves. Great to hear students say solidarity. Community and urgency are recognizing that togetherness means calling each other out in a loving kind way in order to be a part of the progress.
- 6) The conversation should have started here with the new president-elect as to what does that mean as to people for color. More conversation is necessary. The president represents that it is OK for one to show true hate colors. The proof is in the pudding. In teaching, there is data, numbers, history, case history that shows what will happen. The same with marches. When parents say there are problems and students are dealing with racial issues and they fall on deaf ears, it is a sign of urgency. Data, leadership, and conversation is necessary.
- 7) People continue to have a sense of empathy.
- 8) Need to be compassionate and understand how wrong it has been for a long time and understand how emotional this is. Hope to understand necessity and urgency to do something about this.
- 9) Consistency and empathy. This person believed that people were well intentioned and came with a shared experience. Lots of ignorance exist because they don't know. Empathy is understanding that there are different knowledge bases. This is a long haul. Keep consistency to create new norms in the world.
- 10) Doing. Action. The consistency seen is inaction. Yes, lots of ignorance, but much expertise is known to act upon. Admit what is happening is not a mystery and is predictable and action can be taken if there is courage. Not much courage has been seen, i.e. detrack freshmen and train everyone to read at grade level. This has been a conversation for ten years.
- 11) This priority needs more attention.
- 12) Consistency and communication.
- 13) Patience will lead the way and allow for creativity.
- 14) Accept the place and be sensitive to the vast emotions people feel. Concurred with intentional action. Doing something right away is not always the best. Reevaluate and listen to invoke real change.

- 15) Realize the need, deliberate and determine intentional action, and follow through on those actions.
- 16) Everyone has a story that matters. In this work, that change is hard and action is required by being intentional and informed and not feeling alone. Agreeing to a system change means understanding that it will be uncomfortable and stepping out and doing what has to be done regardless. and moving in intentional way to committed goals, admit mistakes, and learn from and be courageous in leadership.
- 17) Be more intentional in the work life.
- 18) Lots of talk but not enough follow-up.
- 19) Expand the net. Engage those people who never come out and to reach more of the students who are not involved. It involves listening to students regularly and often and implementing their ideas. There is urgency in raising the bar for every classroom.
- 20) More peace circles in the school.
- 21) Changing the system will take five years. The actions need identification and then those actions if they are not working will need to be revised to get them to work. Identify problems and the resistances. District 200 has to take its own course. The District 90 Board of Education was the problem because it allowed good performance of some to hide those who were not performing. The achievement gap is bigger than just white and black. It gets worse and what that tells one is that the educational system has flaws. District 90 took the following actions.
 - 1) Admit the problem
 - 2) Charge a task group to make recommendations with specific evidence-based action steps.
 - 3) Charge the administration to look at pedagogy that will eliminate gap.
 - 4) Created measurable outcomes to evaluate action steps with the goal of there being no difference between race, income, ethnicity and expected academic outcome. Every student who walks into school should feel welcome.

Resistance from the faculty, administrators, and community is coming along.

CCB Update

Due to the time limitations, this presentation was tabled.

[CCB Evaluation Metrics](#)

Mr. Chandler reviewed the slides in his presentation. The CULTure, Climate and Behavior Committee's mission statement highlights the following three goals.

A shared sense of belonging throughout the OPRF community;

- A shared expectation of excellence for staff and students;
- Disciplinary interventions and response not predictable by race

He asked what potential student indicators could be considered to the Page 4 slide. Where there things missing? He asked: What would you add change on this list? Which items are the most helpful indicators of 1) academic excellence? 2) Equitable intervention? 3) Sense of belonging. issing?

Comments/Suggestions/Questions ensued:

- 1) add professional development on equity training for Board of Education members.
- 2) How is the District evaluating the pieces to break down the institutional blocks, i.e. tracking of freshmen, etc.

- 3) What is the process that is generating the outcome. If it is differential, the process needs review. The administration noted that as it gets pictures from the data framework, it will show where the District is and the data will drive programmatic changes. It is a matter of vetting and progressive monitoring of the data. It is complementary to the District's work.
- 4) The vision was to have some metrics speaking to the overall CCB mission statement and then that would be turned over to the administration to develop metrics for CCB recommendations. The owners should coming up with metrics.
- 5) The sense of belonging and community building is something should be and can be tracked. Restorative Justice should be included in climate and student belonging. What are the questions on the climate survey? Could they fit into CCB goals. Learning can't help if students do not feel they are in a safe environment. Questions regarding sense of belonging can be added to the Youth Survey. The 5Essential questions can be copied to get the demographic information in order to dig deeper.
- 6) Survey students to find out what they are doing outside of school, i.e. play basketball at Ridgeland, work with organization, i.e., the library, etc. to make sure the full picture is known.
- 7) Hold courageous conversations with the student body. Students need to find their statements and put themselves on the compass and then the District would have some data on where students stand in terms of race.
- 8) Teacher performance. It is about the climate in the classroom. A woman in New York spoke about teaching teachers and teachers would evaluate their peers in a way to help each other. The administration noted that was a "walk-through" and it can be done with administrators once a sense of trust is established in order to be able to give feedback.
- 9) Staff evaluations. Several teachers do have coaching positions and teaching periods. Note: Instructional coaching cannot be used as a remediation tool.

Next Steps

Krystle Jones, Greg Johnson, and Lincoln Chandler will talk about the metrics and conversations at the next meeting. Ms. Cassell encouraged everyone to review the metrics and send any questions to Ms. Kalmerton.

Parking Lot

UMOJA will do a presentation at the December 18 meeting on Restorative Justice Practices and walk through an exercise as well.

JM: plus in for 2003 on the website.

Adjournment

At 8:15 p.m., Mr. Maritire moved to adjourn; seconded by . A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board