



Newtown Public Schools

BOE DEAI Committee Meeting
February 11, 2025

BOE Conference Room
Municipal Building
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT 06470
6:00 PM

As citizens of our community, we will conduct ourselves in accordance with Newtown's Core Character Attributes as displayed in our character tree. We will be responsible for our actions and show respect for each other. We will interact peacefully, productively, and politely. We will be trustworthy and honest and show compassion toward others. Newtown's continued success is contingent upon our ability to persevere, to follow through with our commitments, and to stay focused on the greater good.

AGENDA

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
3. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. Status Update on District's Online DEAI Policy
 - B. Bullying and Racial Incident Reports Update
 - C. Efforts to Improve Communication Following Reports of Bullying, Including Racial Incidents/Bullying
 - D. Update on Expansion of Equity Teams within Buildings
 - E. Staff Culture Survey Update and Next Steps
 - F. Action on Minutes of December 4, 2024
4. **NEW BUSINESS**
5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
6. **ADJOURNMENT**

Please Note: These minutes are pending committee approval.

**Board of Education
Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion Subcommittee**

Minutes of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee meeting held on December 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Education conference room, 3 Primrose Street.

C. Gilson, Chair
D. Linnetz
D. Zukowski

A. Uberti, Superintendent
6 Public

#1 Call to Order

Mr. Gilson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

#2 Public Participation

Dan Lococo, Hi Barlow Road, spoke about the important work the DEAI committee will be involved with to fulfill their obligations and that the committee needs to continue meeting.

#3 Approval of Minutes of October 2, 2024

MOTION: Ms. Zukowski moved to approve the minutes of October 2, 2024. Mrs. Linnetz seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Ms. Zukowski made a motion to discuss the roles and responsibilities of this committee.

Mr. Gilson seconded.

Mrs. Linnetz noted that this was addressed at last night's Board meeting when they voted on the standing committees.

Ms. Zukowski removed her motion but noted that she did not have the revised list of standing committees last night.

Mrs. Uberti would check into BoardBook regarding notification of document changes.

Mrs. Uberti said the committee for the past year has been our consultants giving us an update. She feels DEAI reports should be given to the full board and made public to everyone. Since these are changes in progress, to make the work more visible she is fine having the committee exist and reevaluate the committee at the end of the year to see if it should exist somewhere else. The first step is making the work available to the Board and community. There could also be reports on their progress.

Mr. Gilson does not want this committee to go away.

Mrs. Uberti said the committee is scheduled to move forward and may have a re-evaluation.

#4 Increasing Educator Diversity Plan Update

Mrs. Uberti reported that we resubmitted the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan after making the revisions. Once we have notification, she will provide an update.

Mrs. Linnetz said there are two challenges. One is to address having a diverse pool of applicants and how we expand that, and the second is that every district is taking the same effort in doing this. How do we compete with that search for the talent?

Mrs. Uberti said the strategies regarding this are in the plan and the next report will be on how they are implementing them. The plan is being coordinated by Suzanne D'Eramo as HR

Director. It is very difficult to attract teachers for other reasons besides leaving for other districts for more money. Teachers want to be in school communities where they feel welcome but they are also looking for more money. Sometimes we just don't have minority candidates in the pool. We've used advertising, job fairs and visited colleges. Also, Sandy Hook doesn't have one male teacher.

Mrs. Linnetz mentioned that CAFE is holding a session on Monday on this topic.

#5 School DEAI Goals/Nixon & Co. Update

Mrs. Uberti reported that the strategic plans include DEAI goals. Nixon and Co. attended the summer administrators retreat and brainstormed and worked with the principals on their goals around DEAI. They continue to meet with them virtually. We don't want to rely on an outside source for this work and need to be able to build capacity within the schools to do this work effectively. She wanted to be sure the action steps were measurable. We also do a school climate survey each year. It was helpful for them to share with the administrators and staff in the middle and high schools on how minority students felt about their experiences. Nixon and Co. also conducted listening sessions at Newtown High School. They are coming here December 16 to meet with the equity team members. She suggested that Board members come to a meeting.

Mrs. Linnetz asked if this would be the final year we use Nixon & Co.

Mrs. Uberti thinks its too early to say but would like them to continue in a coaching position. We needed to set a common denominator and we did but the administrators will need help to be sure that gets done, but there are significant pressures on the budget. Mrs. DiBartolo also has goals around DEAI and there is a state group so she is going to be a DEAI coordinator so she can attend their sessions. Part of what she will be doing is to be the facilitator so they can meet regularly. Part of this year's plan is to bring in the next group which includes counselors, social workers, and special education teachers.

#6 Review Data on Racial Incidents Reports

Mrs. Uberti pulled Anonymous Alert data from August 30 through December 3. This is one way students report bullying but it doesn't have to be anonymous. There were 42 incidents and of them there were five classified as racial incidents. Of the five, there were three specific to race and two of the five in the past two weeks were about going back to their own country. Incidents in PowerSchool had 10 racial incidents since the beginning of the school year. A total of 569 incidents were reported since the first of the year at the high school. She feels we should track this data over time.

Ms. Zukowski asked for data on the students.

#7 Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

Mrs. Uberti noted the meeting dates for the rest of this school year are February 11, April 8 and June 10, which are off weeks of Board of Education meetings.

Mr. Gilson asked to notify them of the Nixon & Co. workshops and that updates are given to the full Board.

MOTION: Ms. Zukowski moved to accept the meeting dates of February 11, April 8 and June 10, 2025. Mrs. Linnetz seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item #8 Public Participation

Kate McGrady, 26 Philo Curtis Road, was grateful for continuing the DEI Committee. The subcommittee needs to take action and hold people accountable.

Nicole Maddox, 14 Nighthawk Lane, spoke about racial slurs and her concern about how the DEI work is being done without a coordinator.

Christine Wilford, 60 Jordan Hill Road, has concerns over listening sessions conducted at Newtown High School.

Krystal Baldwin, 37 Bear Hills Road, spoke about students feeling safe in school.

Don Lococo, Hi Barlow Road, spoke about getting a diverse educator pool and the DEI Coordinator position.

Adrian Krauss, 7 Jacob's Lane, spoke about lead teachers and the DEI Coordinator position.

MOTION: Mrs. Linnetz moved to adjourn. Ms. Zukowski Deb seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

#9 Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy June