

## Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

3:00 p.m.

### Virtual Meeting

**Attendees:** Michelle Cardwell, Peggy Kelland, Linda Rappaport, Keith Odums, Jessica Turner, Ray Koretsky, Amy Fazio, Nicolle Strang

**Guests:** Micah Jumpp, 2017 JJ graduate; Laila Morrison, 2019 JJ graduate; Jayna Bryant, 2019 JJ graduate; Ianthe Samuels, senior at JJ; Richmond Addae, 2019 JJ graduate

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Dr. Michelle Cardwell.

---

Topics of discussion: Integration of Cultural Responsiveness into curriculum and other areas. What concerns do our invited guests have? Recommendations will be made to other committees, i.e., policy committee and building environment committee.

- Members of the committee and guests introduced themselves at the start of the meeting. Recruitment of students from RCK needed for future meetings.
- Culturally Responsive Sustaining Framework links four principals to groundwork.
- WCSD has started the work but there is much more to do. Educators and students have important roles.
- Question - Is there a timeline? A timeline has not yet been created. It is the goal of the Curriculum Committee and the WCSD to create a timeline this school year.
- Question - What are some specific things in the curriculum that will be changed? All classrooms will teach cultural responsiveness.
- Jessica Turner - Purposeful Play in kindergarten allows students to play act.
- K-3 Windows in Mirrors books, non-traditional published authors will be made available in the classrooms; Brilliant stories, not impoverished stories.

- Grade 6 - Celebrating other cultures, social justice unit. Teachers received virtual social/emotional training. The Big Read focuses on different cultures, i.e., "The House on Mango Street." Goal is to get more books into the classroom.
- Parks in Every Classroom - received grant for 5th, 8th and 11th grades. It looks at national parks and the non-traditional stories.
- Some have participated in book clubs on "How To Be An Anti-Racist" a look at our own biases and to take note of your own micro aggressions.
- Civic Engagement - increase student voices in the classroom.
- Professional Learning Committee - Professional Learning Plan approved by BOE contains culturally responsive items.
- Rhapsody in Black - Students can watch a one-man performance online for free. Students can ask the actor hard questions.
- Action item: Working with staff throughout the school year to focus on culturally responsive artists.
- District will come up with a definition to define Cultural Responsiveness. May include: making sure all cultures are represented, Must be collaborative so all voices are heard. There needs to be ongoing training for teachers to understand biases.
- Action item: Reframing K-12 social studies scope and sequence. Grades 7 and 8; Runaway Slave Project can be added to social studies and ELA curriculum.
- The Positivity Project focuses on how to treat others. Eight elementary schools use the Positivity Project. Also, PBIS, character education 24 traits. Connect work with other schools. The Wonder Book through Arts in Education focuses on other cultures.
- Request: The Harlem Renaissance should be woven into the curriculum. Need more people of color in books.
- Request: WCSD Mission Statement should be revised to include a declaration that the district is anti-racist.
- Request: Implement teaching of local history regarding slavery and Native Americans.
- Request: Hire teachers of color. Question for the hiring committee: are there enough people of color hired?
- Action Item: Dr. Cardwell will make a recommendation to Human Resources. Recruit more people of color for teaching jobs. Review interview questions.

- Action item: BOE - expand advertising and job fairs to hire more teachers of color.
- Suggestion: Joe Cavaccini, an RCK graduate, is a county legislator and town historian. He can be a valuable contact regarding Dutchess County history.
- Are there unintentional biases? Call out something when we see it.
- Suggestion: Give teachers the tools to have different conversations about race issues. Teachers need to feel supported. There needs to be policy enforcement. Where can students go to report something? Encourage discussions in the classroom about our differences.
- Comment: Student attended John Jay and while called names, it was never addressed. No follow up when reported to the administrator. Needs to be addressed in policy protocol.
- Action item: Code of Conduct - Look at how to handle bias in different scenarios swiftly and sensitively.
- Comment and Suggestion: Bullying is a recurring problem throughout the ages. Address the bully and the victim. Counseling for bully would help.
- Comment from former student: Called the N word at John Jay. Staff didn't know how to handle it. He had to ask about AP classes. No one discussed that option with him.
- Comment: Community engagement for juniors and seniors should benefit people of color in the community. Speak about healthcare, gun violence, art. Do team building with diverse groups of students.
- Suggestion: There should be safe spaces and set meeting times to have hard conversations. Check on the mental health of all students.
- Suggestion: How can the alumni continue in this fight? Dr. Cardwell will do a recap with the participants. Work with the building administrators especially at the secondary level. This continual work will be woven into the pattern in the district for long term, not a temporary fix.
- Building level and District level Culturally Responsive Committees - students need to be involved.

The meeting ended at 4:17 p.m.