

Derby Board of Education

Combined Strategic Planning Workgroup Meeting

September 6, 2016

6:30pm

Derby Middle School

Meeting Notes

Dr. Conway introduced Deb Almonte to present information regarding an equity project that Derby was invited to apply and was selected to participate in. The project is titled "Reimagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable Schools Project" and is a pilot that will provide coaching and an improvement model so that schools can achieve more equitable outcomes for their students. Further information regarding the program is attached. Dan Foley asked if the project could impact the situation we have between the two elementary schools. Deb Almonte noted that work would begin at the Middle School as that is where students come together. Currently have over 60 students and 9 teachers trained in the equity circle model.

Connie Condon began by addressing all present regarding the change in the planning efforts. Committees will meet every other month on the first Tuesday, as part of the BOE Committee of the Whole meeting. Committees will break out by either Academics/Human Capital, Operations or School Culture and Climate and would report out at the end of the meeting.

The committees then broke out with individual agendas. Notes from all committees follow:

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE:

Participants: Alvin Holmes, Jack Walsh, Deborah Almonte, Martin Pascale, Michael Wynne, Alison Conway, Shelley Sheridan, Laura Harris.

Laura thanked everyone for participating.

1. **Survey questions**-have been previously shortened, but we need to discuss with Administrators to get their input before finalizing. One suggestion was that we might get more parent participation if they only completed for their oldest child in school. The concerns are that the validity of the information is compromised when so few complete. Laura also noted that a letter to solicit gift cards from Walmart had been prepared and that Alvin Holmes is assisting in getting it to the right people. Gift cards would be an incentive to complete the survey as all parents completing would be entered into a drawing. Looking to get 2-3.
2. **Parent liaisons**-as proposed by the committee and the Equity Study Groups were discussed to consider requirements, and responsibilities: Ideas brought forward included: all have background checks; could reach out to new families much like a welcome wagon(noted that schools have a very transient population); Find an ambassador who speaks other languages; may need privacy statement and release signed by parents or could have new parent contact school ambassador; could be parent, alumni, retired persons etc.; could also confirm and update contact information; may need to purchase a phone or phone card; could maintain list of contacts for new parents by language spoken and provide at registration. Would want school

ambassadors to be culturally diverse, pass a background check, and bilingual. Believe would need two ambassadors at the High School and Middle School and two at the Elementary schools. Once we have finalized role and process, we can take to governance councils to discuss.

3. Dialog for Change program -- Deb Almonte presented Reimagining Integration as a new partner to help develop more diverse and equitable schools. They will be at the high school 3 hours a week. Cane adult study circle will be invited to participate. Right now 9 teachers and 16 students at DHS are trained in "Dialog for Change"

Reports Due in November:

1. Survey Input Results from Administrators (Laura)
2. Initial Position Description for Ambassadors

ACADEMICS:

Participants: Dan Foley, William Vitelli, Mario Ciccarini, George Kurtyka

1. **Review of Raise** video presented by Dr. Conway
2. **Administrative Reports on Student Achievement-** Mr. Vitelli noted that 6th, 7th and 8th grade RIT scores have increased, with proficiency rates varying, but improving. Alliance districts are all doing much better with Derby being in the top third
3. **Assignments regarding adherence to State Statutes regarding mandatory training:** Mr. Vitelli reported that fire safety protocols had been updated at the Middle School and Bradley conducts monthly fire drills. Also noted that there are now Social Workers at the two Elementary schools and the Middle School. Did note that bullying is a problem, mostly due to social media, but there is a difference between bullying and being mean.

Connie will contact John Saccu to see if he could speak with school Administrators regarding knowledge of required, State mandated training and if they are included in their procedure manuals. Hope to have a report by the November meeting.

Reports Due in November:

1. (John Saccu?) reports on all adherence to State Mandated Trainings and their inclusion in procedure manuals at all schools
2. Dr. Conway to provide achievement scores by demographic, including economic and race to better see the achievement gap that exists in Derby

OPERATIONS:

Participants: Ken Marcucio, Janine Netto, Matthew Conway

1. Ken Marcucio presented information on the discussions being held with Ansonia-see attached

2. **Review Process for budget submission**-In discussing the process, it was noted that school administrators provide forms for teachers to report their needs for the coming year to assist in developing the district budget. Discussion noted that it would be a more useable process if the list were by account numbers and strategic goals, utilized in the fiscal office. These could then be used every year by just changing the amounts as needed. After these are submitted to the Principals, they meet with the Superintendent and Business Manager to review total requests, prioritize and all line items and determine what would be available.
3. **Develop a budget management and reporting process to ensure accurate fiduciary oversight**
 - Include formal reporting process for grants submitted, received and utilization**
 - Review current budget to define cost centers directly impacting education**
 - Develop matrix of educational goals and apply needed support for achievement**
 - Review opportunities to align finances with goals.** Dr. Conway presented the current system utilized by the State and Derby to track all budgeted items, expenditures and that are aligned with the Strategic Goals established in the District Plan and the Administrators. The system allows for constant oversight on expenditures and remaining balances in the approved budget. This is available in the shared documents of the BOE. Ken noted that he felt many Board members could benefit from a full training on how to use the system to understand what is happening fiscally. The Budget committee will be meeting and can receive training. Assignment: Connect with Business Manager regarding developing the form used by the teachers to identify needed classroom purchases by account number and goal.

Reports Due In November:

1. Status of Board Training on Budget Management and Alignment with Strategic Goals (Ken)
2. Proposed budget compilation form for teachers (Connie)

Attachments:

Operations:

Regionalization meeting on 8/15/2016

- Several possibilities were discussed in terms of Regionalization
 - o Shared Services
 - o Cooperative Arrangement
 - o Regional School District
- Currently, it was stated that we already have shared service in place. Our shared service agreement pertains to our Food Services.
- The cooperative arrangement is one in which both parties agree to select areas in which to merge. Under this arrangement, there is the ability to apply for federal grants.
- Full Regionalization is the “most inclusive” of all of the options, since both districts in essence become one. The issues discussed with this option were the fact that there only becomes 1 Board. All unions (teachers, custodians, Administrators, etc.) must merge into 1. The other factors involved in this, is the long term planning in terms of new facilities and the bonding that goes along with this. Both towns would have to agree to the funding portion on the newly designed Regional Schools.
- In conclusion, it was stated that we would continue to look into the shared services between both towns. It was stated that we would look further into the Pre-K program as another possibility

where we can indeed share services. Special Education was also mentioned as an avenue to further discuss.

- On 8/17/2016, representatives from both Derby and Ansonia came together with their Superintendents to see if some students can benefit from attending classes in both Districts' buildings in order to maximize the educational opportunities for all students in each town. The discussion also including after school activities and after school SAT prep instruction. Derby was invited to attend our College Fair in October which takes place during the school day.
- On September 7, 2016, Derby representatives are invited to join with Ansonia at a scheduling meeting at 10:00am at AHS. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss transforming our current schedule into an 8 drop 2 which is researched based in terms of maximizing classroom instructional time. If Derby chooses to select a schedule that is similar to this, then more students will have an opportunity to benefit from multiple class offerings in each district.
- Further discussions will continue between Dr. Conway and Dr. Merlone in terms of merging the Pre-K Readiness Programs.

School Climate

Equity Project



REIMAGINING
INTEGRATION
Diverse and Equitable Schools



HARVARD
GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION

Dear Colleague-

I am writing today to invite you and your district or charter management organization to apply to join us in an exciting new partnership to help develop more diverse and equitable schools and school systems.

This year, the Reimagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable Schools Project (RIDES) will be piloting a coaching and improvement model for working with diverse schools and school systems (either districts or charter management organizations) that are committed to taking better advantage of their diversity and achieving more equitable outcomes for their students.

We are looking for a small set of strategic partners with racially and economically diverse schools who have already started to work to promote equity and who are reasonably close to Cambridge. We hope to learn from the work that our partners are doing—at the school and central office level—and support that work by sharing and field testing diagnostic and improvement tools we have developed as part of RIDES.

During the coming school year, we will be offering a new practicum course, *Coaching for Equity and Diversity in Schools and Systems* for doctoral and masters students with at least three years of experience with organizational improvement, coaching, leadership, and/or diversity and equity work. These coaches-in-training will work with our partners using the RIDES diagnostic and improvement tools in a visioning, diagnosis, improvement and followup process described below. Coaches will work in pairs, so that improvement work can simultaneously take place at the school and the district or CMO level. They will be expected to spend an average of 3 hours/week (approximately 80 hours total) at the site over the school year. Districts or CMOs outside the greater Boston/Cambridge area will need to allocate travel funds for coaches. Otherwise, there are no financial costs for participating, beyond the staff and stakeholder time commitment for the work.

For more information, read the summary of mutual expectations, outline of the arc of the coaching process over the year, and application process below. To get some broader context about RIDES, our philosophy and approach, and brief descriptions of prototype diagnostic and improvement tools we will use, click [here](#).

Thanks for your commitment to diversity and equity in schools. If you think this partnership might support your work, please send me an email indicating your interest by [July 29](#) and get the completed application to us by [August 8](#). Let me know if I can help with any questions or further information.

Sincerely,

Lee Teitel
Lecturer and Director, Reimagining Integration:
The Diverse and Equitable Schools Project

Diversity and Equity Strategic Partnership Overview – July 2016

What you can expect from us:

- Access to diagnostic tools and improvement processes being developed by RIDES. See background on RIDES and prototypes of some of the tools we will use [here](#).
- Two coaches-in-training working with you an average of 3 hours/week (approximately 80 hours total). (Coaches-in-training will have three years of experience in organization improvement, leadership, coaching, or race/equity roles; they will be learning the RIDES processes through concurrent course.)
- A learning community with Harvard and other schools, districts and CMOs on diversity and equity issues. We see these partnerships as strategic ways to share and improve what we are doing, and look forward to learning with you. We will meet with you and your teams for a day-long launch Saturday October 1 and for a closing conference (April 8), and maintain connections and learning over the year.

Our expectations of you:

- Formation (or reformation or expansion of an existing) diversity and equity working group that includes stakeholders from the system level as well as the participating school, who are diverse in race/ethnicity and in roles (teachers, administrators, parents). Recommended size: up to 15.
- Ownership of this work, including commitment of the working group to meet twice monthly over the school year and of other stakeholders to conduct the work that the working group decides upon.
- Identification of a point person at the school and system level to interface with coaches and with the Harvard teaching team for planning and assessment purposes. This includes periodic feedback to help us improve diagnostics, tools, and coaching processes.
- If your district or CMO is not in the greater Boston/Cambridge area, a travel reimbursement fund set aside for the coaches-in-training.

Arc of our work together over the year

Although the following may be modified once the partners are on board, here is the planned arc of the work.

0- August	Partnership Application completed by August 8; responses by August 22
1- September	Formation, or reformation, or expansion of a working group to guide equity and diversity work (During September, interviews will take place between partner sites and coaches-in-training pair; matches will be finalized by late September)
2- October	Working group builds community, develops norms, discusses current system and school issues in the context of race at interpersonal, individual, and institutional levels, gains familiarity with RIDES approach to systemic improvement. (Day-long workshop at Harvard with teams and coaches Saturday, October 1 will launch this.)
3- November	Using RIDES diagnostic tools, the working group does a broad assessment of where the district or CMO and the school is on 7 factors (students, teachers, content; family and community engagement, systems and structures, culture, and leadership) as well as looks with critical lens at role race plays at all levels
4- December	Growing from its diagnosis in November, the group selects an area to dig in further at the school level and one at the system level (Note: they may be linked)
5- January and February	Working group leads a deep dive into the focus areas it selected at school and system level, working with other stakeholders to get a clearer common vision of what the particular area should look like (e.g. culturally connected classroom content) and then following this with a deep diagnostic look at the current reality.
6- March, April, May	Teams analyze the patterns that emerge from the vision and diagnostic work to identify "high-leverage" patterns to work on and then develop and implement follow up plans. They reflect on what they have done and plan for next year and prepare to share insights at the April closing conference.