



**Racial Equity Subcommittee
Fuller Middle School Library
March 26, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.**

Open Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Gloria Pascual
Noval Alexander
Tracey Bryant
Beverly Hugo

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

Motion: Tracey Bryant Seconded: Beverly Hugo Vote: Unanimous (4-0-0)

Public Participation

Community Leader Yemi from Pelham Corporation stated said that some of the feedback he has received from the middle school and high school students are that students feel that when they express that they feel they are being discriminated against racially or in another way it does not get validated. He said that validating the students' feelings, even when they may be guilty of doing something, is important and not to silence them about something they feel is happening to them. He said that some feedback he has gotten is that some leadership they feel has preferential treatment, such as if students are not from a specific population, and that in situations of conflict some populations are favored more. He suggested having some type of peer mediation and training; training students to be able to help mediate situations around them.

Glenda Cohen said she is a teacher at Framingham High School and advisor to the Student Immigration Movement Club (SIM Club). She wanted to introduce the president and co-president, Joey Kuna and Arlene Humaus. Joey Kuna said that they are having a Diversity Forum on April 9th; held by the SIM Club, The Black Student Union, and the Gay Straight Alliance. He said that they wanted to have this forum for everyone to be able to come together, speak their mind and express themselves, and can speak about being discriminated against and to share stories. Joey Kuna said he came here from another continent and trying to get around and learn another language is really hard. He said he was in the ESL program, and he noticed is that it is hard for immigrant students to get involved in to programs when they are

still learning English, and cannot always relate to the others in the program. Arlene Humaus said she is still in the ESL Program, and she feels that they are separated from the kids who speak English, which makes it hard to get involved into school, and to move into the mainstream. She said there should be more support for ESL kids and should try and not segregate them so much. Ms. Cohen said that Joey Kuna is in Step Up as just a sophomore and won a leadership award last year for the ESL Program, and Arlene Humaus was honored at the Salute to Framingham.

Cynthia Villanueva said she is the faculty advisor for the Gender Sexuality Alliance as well as an ESL teacher. She suggested that there be training for the clerical staff that work at schools, so the students feel more welcome, and for the staff to be more understanding and tolerant of different cultures.

FFREE Member of the Public said that she is part of Framingham Families for Racial Equity in Education (FFREE) and they have been talking about creating advocates at the different schools. She said that these most likely would either be a parent or someone who would be there for the kids for whatever needs they may have or the family. She said she agrees with the need for training.

Amanda Shepard said she attended Framingham Public Schools and now is working in the community and racial equity is a big issue for her. She said she has been advocating to incorporate theater games into the public schools as a way to help with social and emotional learning. She said this allows a way for children who do not speak the same language to actually communicate emotionally with each other playing a game, have fun, see themselves as equal, while playing a game together. She said this is a way that we can bring everyone together independent of whether or not they speak the same language. She said that gifted children are also under looked, and also susceptible to trauma. She said that when she advocates for giftedness it is because gifted populations extend throughout racial spectrums.

There was discussion about the possibility of student interpreters, along with that everyone by law is entitled to a real interpreter and not just a student interpreter.

Safe Schools Resolution and Vote

Ms. Pascual read the full proposed Safe Schools Resolution. Mr. Alexander said he had some concerns regarding the language, length, and redundancy, and has a different resolution for proposal that he read. Ms. Pascual said that the original idea for the resolution was presented primarily from the Student Immigration Movement and the other students' movements, as well as the MetroWest Educators for Social Justice, and wants to make sure the subcommittee is honoring their requests. Ms. Pascual suggested that some of the language in Mr. Alexander's resolution would be a better fit in the Anti-Bullying and Hate Resolution. Ms. Pascual also suggested adding that the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff be included in the school employees and student handbook into the original resolution. There was discussion about the City Council looking to put forth an Immigration Task Force to have a conversation about becoming a sanctuary city. There was discussion between the wording of "custody" versus "supervision" changing within the resolution, or if it should be kept as that is how it is worded in the law. Mr. Alexander asked if this resolution has been vetted by anybody, such as

administration or legal, as the resolution quotes some laws. Ms. Pascual said the pieces quoting laws is easily verified, and we are looking to move the resolution forward to the larger community. She added that this includes administration and legal if people feel the need for that. Ms. Pascual said this resolution came forth as we have an issue with this community and in responding to our students who are being questioned about their immigration status. Ms. Bryant said this resolution also speaks to all students, and should. She added that there also should be clearer practices for School Resource Officers. Conversation began regarding the proposed changes Mr. Alexander brought with him for the resolution. Ms. Pascual said she doesn't think the blame needs to be on the environment nationwide only, and that there should be some responsibility as a district and with systemic racism that can be perpetuated by the decisions made by the committee. Ms. Hugo said that instead of sanctuary city due to legal ramifications as opposed to using the wording of safe and welcoming community. She says MASC also provides free legal advice within the School Committee's membership. She said that she wants to make sure the resolution is all encompassing and promoting equity for all the kids and a safe and supportive environment. She added that she feels the Committee needs to zero in on what exactly they are asking. She said that it was talked about how the student handbook seems buried and the bullying report forms and anti-bullying information does not seem to be sent out as much, and suggests that there be a confidential, accurate reporting mechanism. There was discussion about policies already being in place, but not necessarily being followed, and the resolution being something to help with this. Ms. Bryant added this resolution would be placed in the school for everyone to read it and hopefully feel safer and be able to trust more. Discussion was held where Ms. Bryant was going to look at the laws and speak with legal, and Mr. Alexander was going to look at policies. She said we need education for our teachers and our students.

Anti-Bullying and Hate Resolution – Review and vote

The discussion and vote took place on March 11, 2019 meeting.

Second Round Public Comment

Cynthia V said she hopes that the subcommittee doesn't lose steam on the resolutions. She said that we have to be very careful to understand what bullying is, because we have institutional racism.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Ms. Pascual **Seconded:** Mr. Alexander **Vote:** Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Resolution on Bullying

Resolution on for Safe Schools

Tape Recording of meeting

*These minutes were approved at a meeting of the Racial Equity Subcommittee on July 23, 2019.
These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on July 24, 2019.*

