



WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Academic Committee
Zoom Video Conference

May 10, 2021
Minutes

I. Opening Procedures

A. Roll Call, Introductions and Land Acknowledgement

Chairperson Jamela Smith-Folds called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM. Trustee Gonzalez-Hoy read the land acknowledgement.

Committee Members Present: Jamela Smith-Folds, Demetrio Gonzalez-Hoy

Staff/Presenters Present: Rubén Aurelio, Associate Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer; Otilia Espinoza, Interpreter; Dr. Christopher Knaus, Consultant; Dr. Rachelle Rogers-Ard, Consultant; Millie Burns, Consultant; Christine Hatcher, Principal of Riverside Elementary; Michael Hatcher, Assistant Principal of Richmond High; William McGee, Director of Office of African Student Achievement(OAASA); LaShante Smith, Director of Positive School Climate; Asedo Wilson, Teacher and President of the Black Educator Network at Richmond High

B. Approval of Agenda

Chairperson Smith-Folds asked if any changes to the agenda and there were none. Trustee Gonzalez-Hoy moved approval of the agenda as is and Chair Smith-Folds seconded. Motion carried.

C. Approval of Minutes: March 22, 2021, April 21, 2021 and April 26, 2021

Trustee Gonzalez-Hoy motioned approval of the March 22, 2021, April 21, 2021 and April 26, 2021 minutes with no changes. Chairperson Smith-Folds seconded. Motion carried.

D. Public Comment (for items not on the agenda)

none

E. Staff Update

Mr. Aurelio acknowledged that this special meeting on May 10th is also a reserved Smoke Day and there was no school on this day. He thanked and honored school site staff in attendance for the Academic Committee meeting even though this was a day off for them. We are in week four of Spring reopening and we are trying to add students if space is available. Staff are shifting gears to focus on ramping up Summer Programming. Estimating 2000 more students than currently serving in Spring, somewhere between 7000-8000 students. A lot of interest for teachers to come back for in person instruction in summer. No questions from trustees on the staff update.

Public Comment:

none

II. Discussion Items

A. Race & Equity Update

Mr. Aurelio introduced the panel for the evening's Race & Equity update: consultants, Dr. Christopher Knaus, Dr. Rachelle Rogers-Ard, Millie Burns and Director of African American Student Achievement, William McGee; Director of Positive School Climate, LaShante Smith; Principal of Riverside Elementary, Christine Hatcher; Teacher and President of the Black

Educator Network, Asedo Wilson, and Assistant Principal of Richmond High, Michael Hatcher.

Dr. Rogers-Ard began with a welcome and opened that work for the past seven to eight months around centering anti-racist authenticity would be shared by the panel. Mr. Aurelio shared “Why are we here?” how we started and framed this work for the year ahead, policy shifts, partnering with unions, creating race & equity leads at sites and bringing in the consultants to help facilitate the work for the year.

An active poll was conducted with attendees with the question, “How does the multiple, sustained murders of Global Majority people relate to WCCUSD’s academic mission?”

Dr. Knaus and Dr. Rogers-Ards shared “how we move”. Guiding Tenets: Applied Critical Race Theory- 1) Racism: Everywhere, All the time; 2) Schools Silence Critical Educators and Students; 3) Importance of voice and storytelling; 4) Interest Convergence as Systems Auto-Correct. They shared their Theory of Action to address racism. They also shared the essential question for WCCUSD, “Given unabated, public anti-Black racist violence, how does WCCUSD create the conditions for Black and Brown children and leaders to move beyond fighting for survival?”. This essential question has not been answered yet as there is still a lot to do. The Equity Strategic Implementation Team “All-Stars” were introduced.

Mr. McGee shared context: COVID-disparities, ongoing police killings, takeover of the US Capital, and Closing and Opening of Schools

Mrs. Hatcher and Mr. Hatcher shared the local mirror: district leadership turnover, racist violence in schools, systemic racism (often reported as isolated incidents), and disconnect between central office and sites.

Mille Burns shared supports during the beginning/pilot year: resources, identified, and created strategy for three racial equity consultants; dedicated, intentional cross-system weekly time devoted to Racial Equity work; development and implementation of Equity Strategic Implementation team; identified, resourced, and created strategy for newly-formed Equity Leads; strategic resources for Principal supports; Racial Equity summit (November 2020); bi-weekly Equity Leads training; 10 hour-leadership professional development training (Leading within Racism); and develop and support system-wide curricula for Friday session implementation. Concerns were shared that this can’t be a “one and done” or decentralizing the work.

LaShante Smith was invited to share and agreed that everything said was accurate and happy to support the work. Asedo Wilson was also invited to share and agreed with what was said and wanted to reiterate that its a process and can’t be solved this year, new teachers are coming in to district and teachers returning in the Fall, Black Educators Network (BEN) get together and to speak about what they are dealing with and gives an opportunity across sites to interact together.

Dr. Knaus and Dr. Rogers-Ard shared recommendations: 1) Issue a formal, clearly articulated, public commitment to WCCUSD as an actively anti-racist organization; 2) Systemic alignment across the district (every employee; all levels) to disrupt anti-Black racist behaviors; 3) Expand investment and accountability metrics to transition site leader and central office positions to actively anti-racist leadership roles; 4) Expand investment in equity leaders to include ongoing professional development; 5) Expand support systems to help Black and Brown students, employees, and community members navigate ongoing racist violences; and 6) Interrogate, identify, and dismantle racist policies within WCCUSD, including (but not limited to) hiring, placement, evaluation, labor practices, curriculum, teaching, school infrastructure disparities, overt and covert school-based racist attacks, and many more.

Trustees asked questions around the Race & Equity leads and if they started this year, what the role of those leads are and their roles for future year(s). They also requested a deeper definition of surveillance of students of color in our classrooms. Additional questions around the role of the board as a whole and individually; how can we continue to work to continue to increase the voice of staff of color; continuing to do this work knowing that time, due to the pandemic, and funding will be different next year; scaffolding and differentiated instruction for these large meetings and professional developments; and were all schools represented.

Motion: Trustee Gonzalez-Hoy motioned to extend the meeting to 6:30 PM. Chairperson Smith-Folds seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment:

Farnaz Heydari; Jamil Saleh; Gilberto Cooper; Carole Peters

Discussion:

Chairperson Smith-Folds invited the panel members to share before the trustees closed out this discussion for the evening. Ms. Burns, Mr. Wilson, Mr. McGee and Mr. Aurelio shared their final comments, requests, asks, action steps, etc.

Trustees shared their thoughts on racism in this country and in the district. Trustees shared their appreciation to everyone on the panel and look forward to more conversations.

Trustee Gonzalez-Hoy recommended that the full board have a full day race & equity conversation with the new superintendent, Dr. Hurst, when he comes on board with WCCUSD. He also recommended that a request be given to the budget committee to find training funds for race & equity for the 2021/2022 school year.

Trustee Smith-Folds recommended that a decision needs to be made for the district to get out of systemic racism and that a plan needs to be put together and checks in place for the longevity of the plan.

III. Academic Committee Next Meeting

The next meeting dates were set for Monday, May 24, 2021 with modified time from 4:00-5:30 p.m. for the reclassification ceremony that night, June 28, 2021 was changed to June 7, 2021 and August 23, 2021.

IV. Future Agenda Items

May 24th-New School Programs (VAPA, Virtual, Academies, Afro-centric school) and Ethnic Studies;

V. Adjournment

Chairperson Smith-Folds adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.