

Civil Rights Commission (CRC) Meeting  
May 30, 2017

*This is to affirm that the special scheduled meeting of the Princeton Civil Rights Commission has been duly notified and is being conducted in compliance with all provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.*

Attending: David Campbell, Susan Fiske, Leticia Fraga, Karen Hernandez-Granzen, Kiki Jamieson, Tommy Parker, Tim Quinn; Afsheen Samshi

Absent: Molly Chrein, Donna Tatro

Minutes: David Campbell

Ms. Fraga: 6:40pm, Call to order: Special meeting of the CRC for Superintendent Steve Cochrane's presentation to the CRC regarding "Reconciliation and Racial Literacy" in Princeton's public schools (see Mr. Cochrane's PowerPoint slides).

Approximately 80 people in attendance including members of the community, PHS students and alumni, and other participants from groups such as NIOT, Joint on Youth Concerns, Committed and Faithful Princetonians. Also in attendance were PHS Principal Gary Snyder and Assistant Principal Jessica Baxter.

CRC members inquired about and/or commented regarding structural barriers to opportunity; pursuing early racial literacy teaching in Kindergarten; recruiting people to participate in Pre-K programs; and building a more inclusive environment for transgender students.

Public comments included these points:

- It is important for administrators, teachers and the CRC members to have racial literacy and implicit bias training.
- PHS must be a safe space for all teachers and staff as well as students.
- It is recommended to look at disparities in discipline across racial lines through a historic lens.
- It is not good enough for staff to work toward high expectations for all students; we need that to happen now.
- We talk about increasing staff diversity for years but the current system doesn't produce outcomes we deserve.
- All applicants for positions as PHS faculty should be assessed for racial literacy.
- Hiring staff of color must be a priority. We know through best practices what can be done to increase staff of color. Please commit this summer to give half the available jobs to teachers of color.
- Racial literacy and implicit bias training should be mandatory, not voluntary; can there be a commitment to this?
- Although suspensions are lower by race for this school compared to others, there remains a substantial difference in PHS suspensions for whites vs. blacks and Hispanics. It is important to not minimize the problem of this discrepancy. This has a significant impact on the students and

it gives you a sense of how students of color are treated at PHS. You have a very hurt student body and they need advocates and role models.

- It is unclear how a new social worker for equity and health will help; why not hire additional classroom translators given that need?
- Students expressing concern about discriminatory and/or unwelcoming practices at PHS feel dismissed
- There is a sense that kids need to wait until middle school before exposure to transgender issues and racial literacy. It is important that elementary schools begin to address these issues.
- Racist incidents are a violation of community standards and we have to do something proactive about it.
- Racial literacy trainings ought not to be one off events and must be dealt with on a daily basis.
- We should have heritage language classes; by the time Spanish speaking students get to HS they are not in AP Spanish.
- Draw on alums to return to talk about how far we've come and what little progress we have made
- Be sure to find out what is evidence based because some trainings are not useful.
- Regarding the issue of discipline, it is important to look at who is being reported and who is not.
- White students are treated differently; there are higher expectations for them while black and Hispanic students can skip around and miss classes. We should be pushed harder.
- There needs to be more outreach to students so we know what opportunities are available to us.

Mr. Cochrane reaffirmed a strong statement of commitment to hiring; pursuing curriculum adjustments to facilitate authentic conversations about race; the pre-K program; looking at broader disciplinary data rather than just suspensions.

Ms. Fraga acknowledged that the dialogue is good and that action items and measureable goals are needed. As a community, we will work on these together.

Meeting adjourned 8:40pm