

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY COMMITTEE - May 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Melissa called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm

Moment of silence for the continuing racial and social injustice in the world

Dee Jay Redders will be the minute taker for the meeting and Janessa Katzenberger will be the timekeeper

Visitors: Incoming ECSD District Administrator, Laurie Burgos and Anna who is a summer intern for Aimee

New Members: Cory Neely and his wife, Susan, will replace Millie Garcia. Corey provided background on how he and his family came to be in Evansville.

Motion to approve April 15th minutes as presented. Kathi moved and Jen seconded to approve the motion

Discussion: Kathi discussed discrepancy in vote total- 9 members but 10 were on the votes. Change votes to 9-0...James moved and...Janessa seconded the motion to adjourn.

Janessa recommended taking off those absent and just having members present.

Approve the minutes with the indicated changes...unanimously approved.

Summer Schedule: Aimee was booked throughout the summer for the third Thursday of each month.

Discussion of Recent Incident:

Donetta brought an incident to the committee's attention and wanted a discussion regarding the role of the committee in addressing the incident.

Members discussed the incident and more guidance will be provided at the June meeting.

June agenda approved with changes. Motion by Cory Neely and seconded by Kathi Swanson...Unanimously passed.

Committee Facilitator, Aimee Leevey began by picking up with the common language of power.

Common language with regard to power is defined and opened up for discussion:

In regard to resources think about power in these contexts: Wealth, Citizenship, Patriarchy, Heterosexism, Education

Learning to understand power is vital to affect change.

Aimee asked for feedback regarding the idea of power.

Prejudice - Prejudgment - Unsupported generalizations or stereotypes that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized or treated as individuals.

Stereotypes allow the stripping of humanness.

Ex. The slaves instead of the enslaved people

Privilege - unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society.
We can hold privilege while also experiencing oppression

Comments -

Heidi discussed moving from a large city to Evansville, a city of 5,000. Difficulty integrating cultural/multicultural learning when all the same children are grouped together.

Cory's children recognized the difference in treatment of students by staff.

Janessa spoke in regard to hiring of staff and how professional development may provide opportunity to see where blinders are for staff - new and veteran.

Aimee asked about the diversity of the hiring pool.

Janessa responded, from her role in hiring, that there is a minimal amount of diversity in the applicant pool.

Personal experiences were shared by individuals concerning privilege and how that may be used as a way to provide a voice for those that do not have one.

Speaker at Winter Lunch and Learn attended by Aimee - "Advocate for the most marginalized."

Race - a social construct and how does that benefit the dominant race...

People who are white in the United States today were minorities in the past - Irish, Italian, etc.

How does this benefit the dominant race?

How does this appear in our classrooms?

Ideas/Generalizations:

Expectations of students

Guidance provided

White Fragility - a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable. There are a number of people who could not persevere through these training sessions - How do we get past this...

Comments:

Conversations shut down
Self check-in
Fragility and homophobia

What are the non-negotiables - You can have your opinion, but you cannot have your own facts.

White Privilege - the system of white domination that creates and maintains a belief system.

Seen in education, financial institutions - redlining, black pain not being believed.

These are systems that are intentionally built to oppress and we have to be committed to put policies in place to protect our children, teachers, etc.

White Supremacy - the idea or ideology that white people and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs and actions are superior to people of color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs and actions. This is **NOT** dealing with the extremist groups, but the cultural norms - under the radar in many cases - how do you remain in power if no one is questioning your power. The ideas and practices are embedded in the cultural mainstream because they are normalized and can be hard to see which adds to the hold on power.

What is tone policing?

A tactic used by those who have privilege to silence those that don't by focusing on the tone rather than the content. It is used to silence, derail or disengage from the conversation by controlling the people from participating and setting the conditions under which the conversation will happen.

Tone policing is not setting healthy boundaries.

Video to be shared:

<https://www.vox.com/2014/10/10/6943461/race-social-construct-origins-census>

Aimee asked for comments based on Saad's book - particularly on tone policing.

Book to read:

<https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12638622>

End of Meeting Reflection/Discussion:

Six Reflective questions:

1. How have you used tone policing to silence, shut down, or dismiss BIPOC? What kind of words have you used to describe what tone a BIPOC should use?
2. What tone policing thoughts have you harbored inside when you've heard BIPOC talk about race or their lived experiences?
3. How have you derailed conversations about race by focusing on how someone said something to you rather than what they said to you? Looking back now, why do you think the tone that was being used was more important to you than the content of the information being conveyed?
4. How often have you made your willingness to engage in anti-racism work conditional on people using the "right" tone with you?
5. How have you discounted BIPOC's real pain over racism because the way they talk about it doesn't fit with your world view of how people should talk?
6. How have you discounted BIPOC in general because of the tone they use when they talk?

Information from Chat:

Laurie Burgos shared:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/18/us/politics/race-inclusion-wasau-wisconsin.html>

Cory Neeley shared:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/black-homeowner-indianapolis-property-race-appraisal-b1849887.html>

Great book for addressing White Fragility. Comments on how it protects inequalities and racism in America, and how to engage effectively in conversations on race.

<https://www.amazon.com/White-Fragility-People-About-Racism/dp/0807047414>

No motion to adjourn made.