

Minutes for September 30, 2024

Call to order

Compliance

- Adequate notice of this meeting has been disseminated in accordance with NJSA 10:4-8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, specifying the date, time, and place of this meeting.

The Chair made a motion to accept agenda with flexibility without objection accepted

Attendance/Roll Call : *All present*

- Introductions - all commissioners shared brief introductions. What an incredible group of humans we are working with!

Principles of Community :

- Explained how we got here - shared assumptions. Shared some guiding principles from other spaces engaging in similar practices: “No progress without others, nothing about us without us”
- Who we are here to do our work for - invisible (largely) community of students and youth

We will only have four (4) quarterly meetings, but expectation to complete the work, serve on a committee

Approve Minutes - n/a

Introduce Draft Bylaws

- Establish ad hoc bylaw committee
 - Chris Canella
 - Allison Connolly
 - Jaivon Lewis
 - Shannon Cuttle

Committee reports - n/a

Establishing Membership on Committees

- Data - how we count kids and what that translates to in regard to our actions, informing outcomes, perhaps addressing how/when districts are not necessarily acting in good faith - structures and practices that us to a point (example - chronic absenteeism)
 - Chris - spoke about what happened in Cedar Grove - need to address roadblocks to collecting that data (gender/sexuality/pronouns) - how do we know who we are serving

- Professional learning / ongoing learning - addressing gaps in learning, and what research uncovers that impacts educational practice, challenges with pre-service/novice teachers - this will include higher ed (teacher prep, et al) should be thinking prek-20 (not k-12) - equity for potential school professionals - impacting not just students but people part of educational system
- Educational programming - student centered, lived experiences, thinking about youth futures, structures as students experience them during their educational career - look at students as having a youth career - not just in isolated moments
 - (Rich framed it almost as a different form of vertical and horizontal articulation) - varied and vast differences of students throughout our space - cabinet members may fit well in this committee as they have a different lens and draw on different spaces
- Outreach, et al - not just a safe adult - there is criteria as to what makes an adult safe, including the ability to advocate, etc. - not a passive role - tremendous gaps - we have a last mile issue - we're not connecting the community to school and we're not getting everything home that needs to get there - probably the slowest committee and the one that will be most difficult to determine efficacy - place to collaborate with HRCs and also other community centers (like Rustin, but also YMCAs, community centers, etc. - third places) - access places where people already go - community of care is not just about LGBTQIA students but about working across difference, learn to interrupt a negative conversation, et al. - creating communities of care that support our students and close the gaps in the last mile - how we communicate our values and how we model advocacy

Discussion

- Robt - happy that we're recognizing age
- Jo Ann - generational work because parents/grandparents often holding kids back
- Katherine - loves idea of third spaces for this reason
- Jaivon - where will sexual health fit? Lived experience, according to KO - but, could be a couple of domains (lived experience v. what educators need to know v. community)
- Chris - safety of teachers - teachers will not be safe unless our teachers are safe - not just teachers - staff not safe - building awareness
- Robt - can we make it the task of and/or create a subcommittee to address this notion of protecting these individuals
- Shannon - it's a quilt, threads woven into the fabric, need to see how things are connected - unsafe staff can't make students feel safe, etc. - let's keep it at the forefront of our work that all of these things are interconnected and that we needed to recognize the the windows and doorways for the entryways to these conversations - how do we create a climate and culture that brings people into the fold to encourage people to have these conversations
- Trish - talked about the programs DCR offers - community relations unit - always happy to come out and talk to communities, give presentations, etc. - help create a shared understand of the needs of our youth and those who serve them (shared ethos)
- Enforcement relies on reporting - kate discussed why this isn't happening / why that's problematic - rise of biased incidents but not being reported (properly) and why that is - experience regarding reporting and what
- DCR/DOE schooldiscrimination@njcivilrights.gov
- Shannon - Anti Bullying Task Force - most recent report - under-reporting (reporting = documentation = what does that look like = optics) - focus groups - how do we change that narrative - supposed to be a needs assessment to provide additional support, not something punitive - make it something informing, work with school climate team
 - Kate will send out the Anti Bullying Task Force Report

- Chris - Can we create a shared folder (or similar) with resources like this?
- Kate - we will have a webpage and we will use it to aggregate this information, etc.
- Andrea - will help with the organizational piece of this
- Trish - flagged biased data dashboard
- Kate discussed county data collection - why have spikes (zero tolerance) dropped - is it practices (SEL, restorative justice, etc.) or, is it something more nefarious

Executive Director Report

- These are things that structurally need to be attended to - real impact through empirical means
- Got involved in the academic research and thought about how to align it with the EO
- Framework for inquiry and action - reviewed document (domains/committees/areas of impact) with the commission - expected outcomes, anticipated goals, etc.
- Reviewed data regarding LGBTQIA+ youth in the schools and the impact we can and should have with our work
- The work we do will help other marginalized groups as well
- This data will inform how we engage with this work
- Some of it has raised alarms - the work is needed and timely

Initiatives

- Centers/partnerships for community, caregiver, and pre-service educator learning
- Working with many of the 21 Holocaust resource centers to develop and enhance program, and who are willing to provide space, support
- Confident that these partnerships will lead us to national level work
- Youth Advisory - will be attached to one of our actual committees, already making the necessary connections and obtaining the necessary permissions
- Great conversations with places like Colorado - which is a great mirror for New Jersey
- Lots of people doing this work - just different titles and offices - and working hard to find and network with those people

Upcoming opportunities for Commission representation

- NJEA Convention (November 7/8)
- Open invitation to join Kate while tabling at the Convention
- Chris Canella invited the Commission to the SOGI breakfast and/or to stop by the table
- Breakfast is right before Chastan
- Queer programming at NJEA will be available

Question as to whether Kate could attend NJSBA as well (October 24-26?)

Open Public Comment on Agenda Items

- none

Committees

- Data and Analysis
 - Niambi, Zaneta, Keywuan, Allison
- Professional Learning
 - Rich, Karen, Katherine

- Educational Programming
 - Justine, Andrea, JoAnn, Jason
- Outreach, Communications & Advocacy
 - Mike, Robyn, Jamie, Jason, Robt, Chris, Shannon

Attendance

- not sure what we're doing with it yet, will be determined by bylaws, etc. - be present for your committees, and committees themselves

Reviewed upcoming meeting dates, and anticipated structure

Commission meetings are public

Won't pick a secretary until next meeting, after bylaws are drafted

Justine - impact for queer youth in school having to take place out of school as well, wrap around care (4-24) - really loves the idea of having a youth council (GSE has one) and thinks this will be a big deal - look at this as adults through an adult lens and is grateful that we're including this

Chris - what role can students play - will utilize report - but Jamie thinks not allowing them here is protecting them - Kate school boards model

Contact information will be shared internally

What guidance will committees - like #3 - receive for their work

Question regarding budget - which does not currently exist - and might have to wait till next year

Designate seats on our committees (2) to youth

Motion to Adjourn - Made by Chris Cannella, seconded by Jason Sabino