

**HOLLIS SCHOOL BOARD
WORKSHOP
MAY 11, 2021**

The Hollis School Board conducted a workshop on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis Upper Elementary School.

Tammy Fareed, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Amy Kellner, Vice Chairman
 Brooke Arthur, Secretary
 Robert Mann
 Carryl Roy

Members of the Board Absent:

Also Participating: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
 Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
 Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Superintendent Corey stated he would provide a brief history of how we arrived at this point, would review the statement of the Diversity Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Committee, and provide a series of recommendations. The intent would be to bring the subject matter back at future meetings understanding there would be no formal action taken at this time.

Last spring a group of citizens brought forth, to the SAU 41 Governing Board, a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resolution. At that time, he recommended no action as the district was preparing reopening plans, and he did not believe the Administration had the required bandwidth to take this on.

Later, the Hollis Brookline Cooperative (COOP) School District and Board received a communication from a group of students regarding their concerns over issues they had experienced. It is the job of the Superintendent to represent students. He and the Assistant Superintendents met and determined the Superintendent would spearhead the efforts regarding DEI, Assistant Superintendent Thompson would take over the day-to-day health component and Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug the remaining aspects of the re-opening plan and keep the Superintendent apprised of their efforts.

The three school boards were informed of the formation of a Superintendent's advisory committee. That was, by design, to educate the Superintendent as he did not feel he had as much knowledge around diversity, equity, and inclusion as he should, and because he was uncertain of how much would be required of the school boards during the initial phases of addressing issues related to COVID.

The advisory committee conducted a series of meetings and arrived at a statement. At the onset, a member of the committee questioned whether their meetings should be conducted in public. Legal counsel advised it would be best, understanding what was happening across the State, for the discussions to be open to the public. The meetings were conducted via Zoom. Public participation was present at several meetings. Information pertaining to these meetings is posted on the SAU [website](#).

Superintendent Corey remarked the information prepared by the Advisory Committee was ready for presentation a few months back; however, the COOP School Board received a Citizens Petition Warrant Article related to DEI. It was felt important for that to move forward to determine the wishes of the community. The Annual Meeting of the COOP School District was very well attended with residents waiting 9 hours to discuss this topic. The discussion was robust and allowed him to digest further information from the multiple viewpoints expressed.

The [statement](#) begins with the SAU is committed to nondiscrimination and strives to be an inclusive community. The district recognizes that issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion affect all members of the Hollis-Brookline community regardless of their background.

It was felt important to reference NH Senate Bill 263, which came out in September of 2019, to provide an understanding of why this is being looked at and what took us here.

Also desired was the statement that while the law is the benchmark, we are committed to create an even better environment for all students in the Hollis-Brookline community. Our two communities have never been satisfied simply meeting the standards of the law; have always wanted to ensure we are putting forth the best solutions, curriculum, supports for the students we serve.

The statement addresses: “In envisioning the Hollis Brookline graduates of the future, it is the intention of the District to be explicit in the cultivation of a culture that values, respects and encourages our students to engage in difficult conversations...”. The district has engaged in discussions of courageous conversations, which stemmed from the work in the COOP School District around the Portrait of a Cavalier; the vision for a graduate from the high school. We want to be certain that as we go through Hollis, Brookline, and the COOP that we are encouraging courageous conversations around difficult topics. A positive example of that was seen in how the citizens conducted themselves during the annual meeting. It sends a strong message to our students that we can have those debates as a community that respects education.

Identified in the statement is the “goal of understanding each other and the world around them.” One of the things learned from alumni is that living in New Hampshire, we sometimes forget there is a much larger world. When venturing out, we discover it is not the same elsewhere. That local control is a powerful piece that gives each of our communities the ability to structure our schools based on what the citizenry wants.

The first statement is: “We affirm freedom of speech, logic, reason, debate, and civil discourse and aim to graduate young adults who value those qualities and seek to be known for the content of their character.” A lot of community discussion has been round critical race theory. Superintendent Corey stated he does not support that. If a teacher at the high school level were to have a debate around a topic or theory, that is part of education, but promoting something as curriculum is not what he supports. Decisions around curriculum in Hollis can only be made by a majority decision of the elected members of the School Board. If looking at a document focused more on critical theory, the first statement would not be included. The group that identifies with critical theory wants to discount freedom of speech, logic, etc., and want group actions.

Superintendent Corey stated the desire for the community to understand that this is not an attempt to bring in critical race theory. During the COOP Annual Meeting, a document was brought forward that was utilized in the Hollis Primary School (HPS). The conversation with the teacher around the document never even rose to the level of the Superintendent. A teacher completed a lesson, a parent had a question and met with the Principal and teacher, and the situation was resolved. When that document came out, he was as surprised as anyone. He reached out to the Principal who stated it was dealt with months prior, and the parent fully

understood. Sometimes what happens is one person's interpretation is different when a document is passed through multiple people. The district is not trying to utilize curriculum that is based on critical race.

Chairman Fareed asked for clarification and was informed of an assignment conducted at HPS. It became one of the documents that was circulated during the COOP Annual Meeting and the discussion of the Citizens Petition Warrant Article as proof that the district was teaching critical race theory in the school. Asked if the document was a photocopy of an actual assignment, resource assigned to students, etc. Superintendent Corey stated it was a multi-day assignment a teacher distributed. Member Arthur questioned if the Board could have access to the document and was informed copies could be provided. Superintendent Corey remarked the intent of his statement was to state that when you are looking at daily lessons times the number of teachers we have, times 180 school days, there are always going to be curriculum pieces that are questioned by parents. There is a set protocol that is followed, and if at any point the parent was not satisfied, they could bring the issue to the School Board.

Chairman Fareed noted the Board has policies that allow parents to opt out of certain school resources that are assigned to students and a policy that allows a member of the public to officially file a grievance.

Superintendent Corey continued by addressing the level of importance the committee felt was associated with defining diversity, equity, and inclusion:

“Diversity: We commit to honoring diversity, which is expressed in many forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, physical appearance, cultural and personal experience, and political perspective. While group identity is important, we affirm the centrality of the individual student who is ultimately responsible for his or her own thoughts and actions.”

The committee spent a lot of time on this. Addressing the language “(dis)ability status”, Superintendent Corey commented the district continually creates programs and establishes services that benefit the struggling student as well as the gifted student. The district designs what it does as a school system to support those with disabilities as well as those with abilities, in the interest of trying to stretch and grow those students for their future growth.

The political perspective came a bit more from a COOP point of view; that is trying to ensure that the educators do their best to present a balanced opinion when discussing those topics that sometimes can be liberal versus conservative.

The statement around the centrality of the individual student is important as the district is about meeting the needs of the individual. Yes, we have a curriculum for all, but that curriculum gets further broken down and supports put in place for the individual student so they can succeed. That success is for both ends of the spectrum. The example was used of getting to the starting line of the 100-meter dash; we want to give all students equal opportunity to be successful. Once that gun goes off, it is going to be separated by who trained, who has a talent level, and all the other factors that are going to impact the outcome.

“Equity: Our vision of equity is best displayed in a visual.



Equity provides fairness in resources and opportunities so that all individual students get what they need. As a district, we seek to provide equality of opportunity (not outcomes) to each of our students, helping them access their education in the best way possible for their individual needs and allowing our students to excel to the best of their abilities going forward to prepare to enter a competitive world. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, (dis)ability, religion, height, weight, or medical condition. Whether our students experience safe, nurturing home environments or are impacted by physical, economic, or developmental challenges, our community recognizes that our schools can play an integral role in the facilitation of a student’s experience by modeling positive interactions. We understand that creating a culture of mutual respect and value of perspectives can plant seeds of positive change in a child’s life.”

Superintendent Corey highlighted “provide equality of opportunity (not outcomes)”. Using the 100-yard dash, the intent is to ensure everyone has the right clothing, shoes, etc. We know some kids will train harder than others and some have natural ability. When that race starts, we cannot guarantee the outcome. From the point of view of the school district, as much as we want everyone to be as successful as possible, we cannot guarantee the outcome because the student has ownership of a lot of that. Added to the language was the word “competitive”. A lot of discussion occurred around the fact that we live in a competitive world. We do not want to discourage competition; we would like it to be balanced and for every child to have a support system so that when struggling with competition there is someone to go to. We see in our students that competitiveness. They are planning their future and competition weaves its way in.

“Inclusion: We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our school community is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard and where every individual feels a sense of value, belonging, and inclusion. We know that by creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities.”

Superintendent Corey commented the advisory committee did not have a great deal of discussion around the definition of inclusion. The definition of equity was the big concern for community members because of how equity and equality are used in a lot of different venues.

Superintendent Corey stated his recommendations to be:

1. That the Hollis Policy Committee conduct a review of existing policies related to DEI.

This was done by a member of the Advisory Committee who found the policies to be well-written and meeting the requirements outlined in the RSA.

2. That the Hollis School District maintains its time-tested curriculum while examining how we deliver instruction while making no changes to what we teach.

Not promoting any sort of curriculum change but wanting to look at how we teach some of the lessons we teach. Superintendent Corey provided the example of families within the communities who have adopted children. Some of our assignments do not take that into account, e.g., parents and children were asked to do a write-up of why the child was given their first name. The parent had no idea having not been involved in choosing the child's name. The response from the teacher was more figure it out. We need to have a different assignment. What are we saying to a young child when we do not have a different assignment that meets their needs?

At the COOP it was more of the balancing of that political ideology in the classrooms. Often our students are not ready to advocate for themselves. How do we make certain that is happening?

Superintendent Corey stressed, again, he does not want to touch our time-tested curriculum. He spoke of the instance 7 years prior where the district chose not to move to the Common Core; the SAU went through the Common Core and tweaked where it was felt it could enhance the curriculum. When believing what was already in place exceeded that of the Common Core, it was retained. That is the same approach he would recommend in this instance; not change what we teach, look at how we deliver some instruction.

It was noted social studies is being reviewed by the State (regular cycle). The district has budgeted funding in the budgets of the past two years to address this, but the State is about 18 months behind schedule. Superintendent Corey stated he would not want the new social studies curriculum to come out and people have the impression that it is related to this matter. They are separate and unique efforts. When the information is sent out, it will be evaluated, and recommendations made.

3. That the Hollis School District make diversity, equity, and inclusion a strategic priority that is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The SAU is about to complete the Portrait of a Cavalier, which is the last step prior to re-writing the Five-Year Strategic Plan. In that Strategic Plan, under one of our goals and objectives will be that we make this a priority and we put in a timeline so that we are regularly talking about this topic.

4. That we continue our programs and services to help those who need assistance while allowing those with special ability to stretch, grow, and be challenged at an appropriate level.

We have multi-faceted programs for students who are struggling, and several programs for those students who excel in math, are good writers, better readers. The entire reading program, K-6, is based on a student's ability to read.

5. That we promote, where developmentally appropriate, the use of courageous conversations to teach our students to feel comfortable in expressing themselves now and in the future.

Those courageous conversations may not occur as much K-6 as they may 7-12. There will be opportunities at the upper elementary school, and we can get into an intentional process where we start to work with our families about what a courageous conversation is so that they know the skill, and when a child moves up to the COOP it is a familiar concept.

6. That we further investigate the Choose Love program and determine if we should expand it throughout the Hollis School District.

Pre-pandemic, the SAU brought in the Choose Love program for Social Emotional Learning (SEL). The program is based on the tragedy that occurred in Connecticut as the result of a school shooting. It has been adopted by the State of New Hampshire, and the Governor is a huge proponent. Our teachers have started professional development in what is a strong program.

Choose Love has started to expand into DEI. Superintendent Corey remarked, based on what he knows to date, he believes the SAU should investigate further expansion of that. The Administration has been in contact with the founder of the program, and she would be more than willing to come back and conduct another professional development for staff.

Superintendent Corey noted the June agenda would be lighter than is typical and should provide the opportunity for additional discussion and public input.

Chairman Fareed spoke of the value in having all the information provided in a single summary. She spoke of appreciation for all the work that has gone into this. She requested each member of the Board provide a general reaction to what has been heard up until this time and their general sensibility. The Board will need to shape a response to the recommendation that it work from this draft document the committee has produced. She would like to understand what each member feels, in general, about the document itself.

Member Mann commented on the national conversation and events that have occurred that have caused concern. He can understand the impetus for the request and does not believe there to be any harm in confirming what our values are; how we approach governance of this school district. He is agreeable to spending time discussing this matter as the Board represents the community, which has spoken on both sides of this issue. He has spent a great deal of time just listening to the concerns individuals have brought forward. He is in favor of making some sort of statement. He does not object to the format of a resolution.

Vice Chairman Kellner spoke of being strongly in favor of a resolution. She believes the policies are in good shape, but the policy for anti-discrimination is the low bar. As a district that is not generally good enough for us; we want to exceed that. It is important to reaffirm our commitment to an environment of inclusivity.

Member Roy remarked she is unclear on the implications of calling something a resolution. She agrees there is a need to recognize the community is made up of many kinds of individuals. She wants to be certain what the Board is doing is not making an empty statement; it must be acknowledged and mean something. She believes the recommendations of the Superintendent provide a good direction. She has listened closely to what our community members have had to say, and there is a lot of passion in every direction. She supports the work of the committee and the 6 recommendations of the Superintendent.

Member Arthur stated agreement. She has some understanding of what a resolution is and will share the response received from the attorney at the New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA). She stated her desire for a resolution and to make the community aware of the Board's intentions. For the most part, she is in favor of the recommendations of the Superintendent.

Chairman Fareed shared the views provided including the question around the authority/responsibility a resolution has. Having searched through State RSAs, she was unable to find reference to a resolution. Her sense is that something called a resolution, that the Board votes on without any formal process the way policy work has it built in, is mostly a statement by the members of the Board as to what we envision in this subject

matter that serves as an overarching sensibility for the kind of cultural priority we want to give it in our strategic planning, etc. Since there is no RSA describing anything called a resolution, she does not believe it to have any authority or mandate over our families, employees, etc. It is more a statement of what our overall global intent is and the kind of direction we want to see our employees filter their work through. If that proves to be the case, she is comfortable with making a statement that reconfirms our values, the Board and staff complying and by implication therefore agreeing with that sensibility. She is supportive of the objectives.

Member Mann spoke of having conducted some research around resolutions and spoke with legal counsel at the NHSBA. A Resolution is not binding. It is more of a public statement that captures your values, what you will pursue, etc. It can be a first step to other things. There are only three things a School Board can do; raise and appropriate or expend funds, create policy, and create or eliminate positions. A resolution can have any language but must transfer into one of the areas of authority for the Board. It could be a first step. It provokes critical conversation and a direction.

The 6 recommendations themselves form a framework for a resolution. That is the framework that puts action around the statement of the resolution. DEI is a continued conversation. It is what this Board does over and over again, e.g., are we demonstrating, is it visible to the community the conversations, the policies the Board creates, decisions made, direction set. Is it visible to the community that the Board is doing that grounded in DEI? If it is not, it should be. What we do and the policies we create will set the tone throughout the entire organization with the Superintendent's recommendations and assistance.

Chairman Fareed noted the Board would not take any action at this time. The question of the impacts of a resolution requires additional clarification, which will be addressed. She suggested moving forward in the discussion with the assumption that the definition of a resolution will be one Board members will be comfortable with.

She asked if members had any strong concerns around the language on the first page. Member Arthur concurred with Member Mann that the resolution be built around the Superintendent's recommendations. Chairman Fareed questioned if the desire were for the two items identified following "Therefore, may it be resolved that:" to be replaced with the 6 recommendations of the Superintendent. Member Roy stated she would not wish to see that change.

Superintendent Corey spoke of the amount of time that went into careful consideration of the language utilized, and suggested the subject be included on a future agenda, therefore, providing Board members an opportunity to review the material further. The desire is to have something in place in September although it might be something that starts simply and grows throughout the school year. Understanding this will be incorporated into the five-year Strategic Plan, there is time to establish the solid foundation that then moves to the COOP and ultimately to the college environment and the real world.

Chairman Fareed commented that pretends this is not in our hands today. She wished for feedback. The Board has never had the opportunity to discuss this. She wished to understand the opinion of Board members concerning the document.

Member Arthur commented it appears to be a working document/draft, and this was not intended to be a final presentation. Member Roy referred to the comments made that the 6 recommendations of the Superintendent were the framework for a resolution. The draft document the committee worked on is what inspired and resulted in the 6 recommendations. What the Board needs to do is look at the 6 recommendations and work backwards. The recommendations need to tie back to the statement. If the action is what is important, the Board needs to understand if the statements reflect what has been decided to be the action.

Vice Chairman Kellner remarked she likes the recommendations and believes the focus of the discussion should start there.

Member Mann remarked when this first came forward he was publicly critical of how it was put together. This is really the first opportunity the Board has had to really go through it and have the Superintendent lay it out. He is appreciative of the definitions, citing RSA, and how we align to those things. This is not the document though. The document the Board puts forth needs to be constructed around the recommendations. He spoke of how useful the statement will be from the standpoint of a reference. He would like to see the Board create a document that uses the language and terms defined in the statement.

He appreciates how the statement calls out the cultural and personal experiences and political perspective. Political does not really work within this district, but to him it translates to diversity of thought. Individuals should be able to share their point of view without fear of retribution and feel confident their teacher will not inject their personal political insight into the room.

Chairman Fareed stated if issuing a statement, it would not be limited to the 6 recommendations; would require introductory language. She has not been shy about expressing her opinion about how the DEI Advisory Committee brought this to bear but is looking at it with fresh eyes and thinking as an incomplete, introductory statement, it has a handful of definitions, foundational references to RSAs, the quote from Josh Ide, and the graphics. She feels it should be retained as potentially the preamble to whatever is the ultimate statement of the Board.

Chairman Fareed questioned the will of the Board relative to utilizing the statement of the committee to form the statement of the Board. Member Roy stated her belief the Board has concluded that the action is what matters. We figure out how to introduce that action and use this statement to do it. Member Arthur questioned if there are possible ramifications that someone wanting to disrupt the Board's work around this subject could come about by the Board's use of this document/statement from the advisory committee because the committee is no longer functioning or some Right to Know request, etc. Chairman Fareed noted once language is adopted by the Board it is not the committee's or the Superintendent's, it is the Boards.

Superintendent Corey stated the committee was aware they were doing work to bring to the school boards and that the boards could choose to do nothing with it, adopt it, change it, etc. On many occasions, the committee was told they had no control over curriculum, policy, or finance as those are the roles of the Board. This work was getting the sense of 7 different people coming together with some 100[±] people, over time, participating over Zoom and providing input. He received letters, phone calls, and email input. The committee has disbanded, and the next stage is to give the information back to the Board. It could be that the Board decides to form a sub-committee of its membership (2 members) to provide a draft document.

Member Mann commented on a key element being the definitions and noted the amount of time spent on that. That work has saved the boards many hours of discussion. However, he does not feel it the job of the resolution to set out definitions. The resolution can be worded with these definitions in mind. The definitions can be referenced.

He commented during the last meeting, each member of the Board was asked to adopt Policy BCA. Although he has reviewed the document several times, this time it had a greater impact because of what is happening around DEI. Policy BCA is written almost like a resolution.

Member Arthur spoke of her appreciation of the work that went into the definitions. The committee, however, was formed as a lay person committee. Without references to where these terms are defined from, she wishes to be careful of putting the Board's approval on any definitions.

Chairman Fareed stated the need for the Board to determine next steps. Member Arthur agreed with the suggestion of a sub-committee. Member Mann suggested it to be acceptable to state the definitions are the result of input from community members. He did not feel it necessary to form a sub-committee. The resolution should be about 4 sentences in length. Everything should run from that. Member Arthur questioned how the document would be written if not utilizing a sub-committee.

Chairman Fareed disagreed with the resolution being 4 sentences in length. Member Mann clarified it should be relatively simple. There is time between now and December to formulate the language. He suggested the draft statement provided could be given to the Policy Committee to work on. Chairman Fareed noted the Policy Committee is comprised of the two Principals, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and is headed by the Board representative. The Policy Committee is responsible for recommending language, bringing forth legal opinions, practical histories to back up their recommendations, etc. It is the Board that wordsmiths and determines whether to adopt policy. If the desire of the Board is to create a sub-committee to move this project forward, she wished to understand that.

Member Roy stated her opinion the Board cannot talk about whether the language in the statement provided is the document until discussing the 6 points of action.

Chairman Fareed suggested the Board discuss, in general, the 6 recommendations brought forward by the Administration. The suggestion was made that the Board then consider whether to request the Policy Committee draft language for consideration or a sub-committee be formed to do that work.

1. That the Hollis Policy Committee conduct a review of existing policies related to DEI.

Asked if there are specific policies highlighted for review, Superintendent Corey noted a member of the DEI Committee (retired attorney) volunteered to review district policies to determine if the district is compliant. He felt the district is. As the district has always taken the approach of looking at our policies to make certain they provide for our students, Superintendent Corey suggested a review be conducted of policies relating to DEI to facilitate a discussion and identify if there is a need for updating.

It is a matter of good practice particularly given some of this discussion is related to State RSA passed in September of 2019. The SAU would work to identify the policies and turn them over to the Policy Committee.

Member Roy questioned the timeline for policy review, e.g., is the intent to look for them to line up with the actions in the resolution.

Superintendent Corey noted he prioritized his recommendations by order of how he believes they need to occur. The critical piece that is done by the Board is policy. Policy should be reviewed to ensure there is no conflict between policy and a potential statement put out by the Board.

He cautioned being concerned with getting something done quickly. We can always make things better in September by actions that we take. He stressed the importance of getting this right so that when the rubber meets the road we are just tweaking and reviewing over the next few years not restructuring.

Member Mann spoke of the audit scheduled for the policy manual. Superintendent Corey stated whether using the NHSBA or district counsel for that review, he would look to have them prioritize identifying the right policies are being sent to the Policy Committee for review.

Chairman Fareed pointed out that New Hampshire State laws are different from any other state. She noted during one of the annual meetings reference was made to a legal condition where if you have paid an attorney for a legal opinion rendered, that is a legal basis for acting on that opinion. Another Attorney may have a different opinion, but if not paid to render that opinion, simply receiving the differing opinion does not constitute a foundation to act. Although helpful to have received the opinion of the member of the advisory committee who reviewed the policies, the Board cannot base any of its policy work or decisions on an advisory relationship.

Superintendent Corey reiterated the Superintendent's DEI Advisory Committee was informal and has no bearing. Although the district likes to utilize the NHSBA, their attorney would not be the one in the courtroom should that become necessary.

Asked if legal counsel should be consulted prior to putting forth a resolution, Superintendent Corey restated a resolution would be a non-binding statement and would not require that level of legal review. Legal counsel weighed in as they made their own statement months ago, as many companies did around DEI.

2. That the Hollis School District maintains its time-tested curriculum while examining how we deliver instruction while making no changes to what we teach.

Superintendent Corey remarked the district has a time-test curriculum; one that is strong and was developed by many people over many years. We are at the point where we tweak curriculum as opposed to reinventing it. He is not recommending curriculum be changed. What he is recommending, which is more of an administrative function, is when conducting teacher observations, professional development, etc., we start to highlight that thought process that not all teachers think of, of how to include everyone. The expertise is in-house, and the process will not be difficult.

Vice Chairman Kellner stated the desire for professional development to be called out. Although likely buried within several of the recommendations, she would like to see it called out separately and highlighted. Superintendent Corey responded professional development is an over-arching umbrella for all the recommendations. He will work to specify that.

Asked about the examples provided earlier, and if the intent is to not teach such lessons or to make options available within the lesson, Superintendent Corey responded it would be to provide options. He would want the lesson to provide students an array/choice so that they can make that choice because it meets their need without potentially having the rest of the class discover why they are making that choice.

Member Arthur stated she too would like to see specific language around professional development. She spoke of how bias can impact how we teach lessons. She is appreciative of the discussion around it being the job of our teachers to assist students, however they arrive in our classroom. To do that we need to understand our own biases and really have tools for how to know each of our students well.

Chairman Fareed commented when reading the definitions and thinking back to the Superintendent's comments around the typical makeup of New Hampshire, Hollis, and our schools, there are many areas listed here that are poorly represented by our demographics, but they are not unrepresented. As has been pointed out in this document and in the Superintendent's comments always, our students are not going to stay in Hollis and Brookline, they are going to move on into the larger world where there is a great deal more diversity. She feels we have a great deal of internal talent and skill and has heard from many educators across the buildings how incredibly inspiring it is to find out that their colleagues have the skills that they are able to share. There are several categories in our definitions where we do not have representation or an authentic voice. She would like to investigate or research the possibility of a consultant so that our children can be exposed to information about these topics from people who have expertise and authentic personal experience.

3. That the Hollis School District make diversity, equity, and inclusion a strategic priority that is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Asked what that looks like, Superintendent Corey responded DEI along with SEL will fall under some goal, objective, or priority within the Strategic Plan. From that plan, we do our annual goals. The district looks to target goals to hit on those strategic areas, but in different fashion. He used the example of an authentic voice, that could be one of the ways a Principal accomplishes the task of trying to expose students to further elements of DEI. It could be a multi-cultural day, community members bringing a skill or expertise, etc. From his standpoint, putting something in the Strategic Plan is relatively simple; the key is the action items over the five years of the plan that bring it to reality. He sees this dovetailing nicely with the SEL section because that is also where we brought in Choose Love. There will be some professional development on that program, and they may be a resource for that authentic voice once we begin working with them and gain the credibility. It is a balancing act of not wanting this to be a book that sits on the shelf that says it is in the strategic plan.

Every year we bring those strategic goals to an understanding of what they will be for the students. That work will start June 24th when heading back to a more traditional environment with the planning and administrative retreats.

Chairman Fareed commented when the Strategic Plan was first created it was considered a Specific and Measurable Achievable or Attainable Relevant and Time bound (SMART) Plan with SMART goals. She questioned if the Administration still functions in that way. Superintendent Corey remarked the SMART goal is basically a series of requirements that make that goal attainable. When you meet those requirements, you have attained the goal. Previously that was done at the district level, and the year before the pandemic it was instead done as an SAU; the four elementary Principals were informing on how this was going to be interwoven into their schools. He believes the same type of strategy will be looked at.

Member Arthur commented on the remarks of the Superintendent that there are Administrators in district that have a strength in DEI work. She feels the subject is relatively new. She remarked the Superintendent feels our Administration does not need an outside resource because they already have the knowledge on this subject. Superintendent Corey stated that is absolutely the case for the forming of the Strategic Plan. To implement the Strategic Plan there may be components where guidance will be needed. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug belongs to the Curriculum Instruction & Assessment (CIA) group, which is comprised of all Assistant Superintendents in the State. She has her group, and the Superintendent has his, which are networking resources. There may be times when the district has faculty who are further along because they took coursework in recent years. We do have some community members who know Hollis and Brookline very well, happen to teach at the college level, and would be willing to offer assistance/guidance, but because of their regular job cannot commit to something on a large scale. He believes there will be a time, if done correctly, where the district should need resources. We should go to a point we are uncomfortable with. There would be

the need for the Administration to come before the Board and identify what those resources are if there is an expense. By then, what has hopefully occurred is the building of credibility within the community of why those resources are needed.

4. That we continue our programs and services to help those who need assistance while allowing those with special ability to stretch, grown, and be challenged at an appropriate level.

Superintendent Corey remarked on support services, the Assistant Superintendents have done an incredible job of programming. We still have needs at times to put students into other environments, e.g., out-of-district placement. When we get to a point where a student's needs cannot be met, we have enough resources. Our reading program, by design, really allows a child to stretch. In the math program we have multiple tracks to allow students to stretch in enrichment activities. When stating looking to stretch, it is that strategic planning to the Board of what is next, what do we want, e.g., the STEM room at HPS that did not exist 5 years ago, the environmental science program now has a full-time teacher. At the same time we need to justify those benefits because one of the biggest things we do is the budget.

Chairman Fareed commented to include that on this list is to say that all of that, which is what we do as a school district needs to be done through the lens of DEI. Superintendent Corey responded no, what it says is we need to make sure that we consider DEI when we look at things.

5. That we promote, where developmentally appropriate, the use of courageous conversations to teach our students to feel comfortable in expressing themselves now and in the future.

Superintendent Corey remarked for Hollis he sees that more perhaps in the 5th and 6th grades. When looking at the document, he wrote his recommendations through the lens of a student. He wants them to have some conversations as 5th and 6th grade students that may be a little uncomfortable, but in a very protected and sheltered environment because that is where they are developmentally. As they get to middle school and become a little more rebellious those conversations start to occur naturally as they are starting that initial separation from their parents. At the high school he wants there to be those difficult conversations around whatever topic it is so that when we send kids off to college, we know they can survive on a campus.

He provided the example of a difficult conversation being coming to an administrator and saying this happened. The key is they found the administrator, told them what happened, and were able to take care of that. That is a skill for college that we want every student to know where you need to go if something occurs that bothers you or is inappropriate.

Member Roy questioned why we would not want that to happen in an elementary school, using the example of identifying something that is uncomfortable or inappropriate and knowing where to go. If that is happening, couldn't we identify that as a courageous conversation for sake of continuity? Superintendent Corey responded that could absolutely be done. He commented on the amount of time spent on "stranger danger", etc. If everything goes well at the Town meeting on Saturday and the new Community Resource Officer is added, there would be another person from outside that can help to start these courageous conversations.

6. That we further investigate the Choose Love program and determine if we should expand it throughout the Hollis School District.

Superintendent Corey remarked what he has seen and experienced of this program is a positive approach of working with teachers to help students. He believes they will take the same thought and care as they move into DEI. The response from staff was positive.

Member Roy questioned the grade levels Choose Love services and was informed it goes all the way through.

Superintendent Corey suggested next steps to be for him to work with the Chairman and Vice Chairman to craft the agenda for the next meeting and carve out time for a workshop format for DEI. Decisions could be made at that time, in that public setting and with that public notification, around whether to form a sub-committee, etc. The Board agreed with that approach.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER ROY TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ARTHUR
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0**

The May 11, 2021 workshop was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____