

Hartford Committee On Racial Inequality

Meeting Minutes of 3/21/18

Attendance: Allene Swienckowski, Becca White, Nancy Russell, Simon Dennis (Clerk), Sara Campbell (Vice-Chair), Ann Reynolds, Michelle Boleski, John Hall (Chair)

Absent: none

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05.

The Minutes of 3/7/18 were discussed and passed without objection.

Group Norms were mentioned and left unchanged.

Discussion of the Memo from the Hartford Committee On Racial Inequality to the Hartford Selectboard. Allene read section one of the Memo into the record. There was general discussion of the timeframe regarding selectboard response to a violation of the Policy on Equity and Inclusion. **Becca White moved a motion to substitute “Elected officials that observe that a violation of this policy has taken place shall bring this matter to the attention of the board at the next scheduled meeting.” in place of “the second to last paragraph of the first Recommendation to the Selectboard in the Memos to both School and Selectboards. The motion passed unanimously.**

The committee agreed that the we would leave all further edits to the Memo in a pending state based on a general nodding of heads and then pass all the edits en mass at the end of the meeting. Please find all edits listed in the version of the Memo attached at the end of this Memo.

Becca read the second recommendation. Minor corrections were made to make the recommendation consistent with current School Board and Hartford School District practice.

Allene read the third section. Minor corrections were made to make the recommendation more consistent with current School Board and Hartford School District practice.

Nancy read the fourth section. Corrections were made as listed.

Simon read the fifth section. Minor corrections were made

Allene moved that the MEMO as amended by this evenings discussion be accepted and recommended to the Hartford Selectboard and School Board. All were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

Sara moved to close the meeting at the 9:21. Allene seconded it. All were in favor.

Submitted by Simon Dennis

MEMO

To: Hartford School Board, Superintendent of Schools

From: The Hartford Committee On Racial Inequality (HCORI)

Date: March 21st, 2018

Subject: Recommendations Regarding Items Outlined In HCORI Charge, dated April 4th, 2017

In accordance with the HCORI Committee Charge dated April 4th, 2017, this Memo includes recommendations on the following four topics:

1. Hartford Policy on Equity and Inclusivity
2. A Cultural Competency Training RFP
3. School District Recommendations
4. A Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusivity
5. A Standing Committee Charge

A second Memo minus the recommendations regarding the Hartford School District is being simultaneously submitted to the Hartford Selectboard and Town Manager.

1. Recommendation regarding a Hartford Policy on Equity and Inclusion

The Hartford Committee On Racial Inequality recommends that the Hartford School Board add to existing Policies on Equity and Inclusion the following policy addendum.

Recommend Hartford Policy On Equity and Inclusion

The Hartford School District is committed to creating a town-wide culture of nondiscrimination and inclusivity for all Hartford residents, business owners and visitors, and to achieving and maintaining a Town environment where all members feel welcome, respected and safe. Elected Officials in the Town of Hartford are expected to serve as role models and to demonstrate their commitment to this goal in their everyday conduct. To that end, the policy articulated in the following two paragraphs will be liberally construed and strictly enforced so as to achieve these goals.

Verbal or written expressions, actions or transactions by elected officials shall not reflect a prejudicial orientation towards any person or group of people on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry),

disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status. This policy applies to the delivery of district services and to the written, verbal or other interactions of Hartford Elected officials with other members of our community regardless of the location where they take place.

Elected officials that observe that a violation of this policy has taken place shall bring this matter to the attention of the board at the next scheduled meeting.

Further, elected officials who observe that a fellow elected official has acted in violation of this policy, are required to recognize the misconduct through a formal motion during a regular meeting. Any elected official who fails to take this action in a timely manner upon learning of a violation of this policy, is themselves in violation of this policy.

To comply with this policy, School Board members are advised to seek out and receive appropriate training.

2. Recommendation regarding Cultural Competency Training

The Hartford Committee on Racial Inequality recommends that the Hartford School Board release a ~~general~~ RFP, in conjunction with the Hartford Selectboard, seeking to obtain proposals from qualified ~~and experienced persons,~~ organizations, ~~companies or firms~~ to provide leadership trainings for ~~Town of Hartford and~~ Hartford School District elected officials, subject to the approval of the Superintendent of schools, and school management staff on the tenets and competencies of culturally responsive leadership. Such trainings should address and explore the following:

1. Implicit and explicit biases and their impact on School management and governance
2. The constructs of race, culture, diversity, and inclusion as they apply to school policy and practice
3. Practices of culturally responsive and inclusive school governance

3. School District Recommendations

Issue to be addressed: Racial inequality in Hartford Schools.

~~To challenge and address instances of racism through diversity, sensitivity and implicit bias training programs for administration, sSchool bBoard members, and others so designated by the sSchool bBoard.~~

Recommendation #1

To support and further the implementation of the Hartford Schools' **existing** culturally responsive programs in each of the **eight campuses** ~~five schools~~ whereby administration, teachers, and students recognize the connection between ethnicity, **social class, power, white privilege, prestige,** and opportunity. The HCORI sub-committee on Education requests continued engagement with Principals in each of the ~~five~~ Hartford Schools to review progress implementing the culturally responsive programs through meeting twice during 2018-19 at the respective schools in order not to inconvenience Principals. A further recommended step is that a checklist of steps toward full implementation of goals be developed by the Hartford School Administration with input from the HCORI sub-committee on Education as a guidance tool to chart progress and to identify areas of difficulty implementing compliance.

Rationale: New education protocols are necessary even to begin to minimize racial inequality in our society and schools. Although legislation has been proposed and some laws passed and instituted decades ago with the intent of minimizing racial inequality in our society, recent events present the clear reality that racial inequality is still active in our daily lives. To proactively combat institutionalized inequality in our community, our schools must adopt and consistently implement a Culturally Responsive **Programs. Curriculum.**

Recommendation #2

Although Hartford is a small rural community, it is imperative that our community and especially our schools attract and hire more People of Color to assist in the **deconstruction of racial inequality. To date,** nationwide searches for administrators and teachers who are also People of Color have not been successful. We recommend, ~~and volunteer to assist in,~~ that the School Board encourage the Superintendent to **recruitment** through other avenues to attract People of Color to fill open positions in our schools.

Rationale: We recognize that the school board and administration face many challenges in hiring and retaining People of Color to fill administrative and teacher positions. However, the hiring of People of Color in these positions is essential to

augmenting and strengthening the implementation of a culturally responsive curriculum, and we also recognize the importance of our community as a whole in creating a welcoming environment for People of Color.

4. Recommendation regarding a Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusivity

The Hartford Committee on Racial Inequality recommends that the Hartford School District work with the Town of Hartford to enter into a three-year collaboration with a municipal equity planning organization such as the [Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity](#) to develop a Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusivity. Money for this should be considered among the funding priorities of the 2019-2020 budget or sooner as resources allow.

5. Recommendation regarding the future of the HCORI Committee

The Hartford Committee On Racial Inequality recommends that the Hartford Selectboard and Schoolboard constitute a standing committee to continue the work that HCORI has begun and charge this committee in the following way. [To better reflect the goals of the committee, we suggest that the committee name should be changed from Hartford Committee On Racial Inequity to Hartford Committee On Racial Equity and Inclusion.](#)

Charge For Hartford Committee On Racial Equity and Inclusion^{1 2} (HCOREIIE)

The Town of Hartford recognizes that in order to continue to grow economically and maintain cultural relevance into the 21st Century, ~~that~~ we must become increasingly hospitable to people of color living and working in Hartford. To accomplish this will require the Town to continue to grow its level of cultural sensitivity and competency as well as its awareness of the experiences of people of color. For this purpose, the Hartford Committee on ~~Social Inequity~~ [Racial Equity and Inclusion](#) is this ___ day of _____ in the year of _____ constituted as a standing committee and charged as follows:

¹ See Alameda County Public Health Department, *Life And Death From Unnatural Causes* in References

² See Nicole Dussault, "Equity and equality" in References

Charge

The HCOREI Committee is charged with gathering information and making recommendations to the School Board and Selectboard, coordinating programming, and engaging in public dialogue for the purpose of:

- I. Continuing to work towards achieving racial equity within municipal and school governance.
- II. Continuing to support racial diversity including in the general Hartford population, in the Hartford Business Community and in the Town and School staff.
- III. Providing support and a voice to people of color living within the Town of Hartford
- IV. Supporting the Town and School District in developing a strategic plan for equity and inclusivity.
- V. Supporting the Town and School staff, elected officials and residents of Hartford to increase cultural competencies through cultivating greater understanding of concepts such as implicit bias, white supremacy and institutional racism.
- VI. Recommending means and procedures by which the Town and the School District should endeavor to identify biased outcomes and disparities, with measurable social inequity. ~~These in- areas could include the following: ing but not limited to:~~
 - A. Affordable housing within the five villages
 - B. Application of laws and ordinances by police and court appointed officers (e.g., social workers and probation officers)
 - C. Impact of Town bylaws, ordinances and policies on residents
 - D. Application of administrative action to school children and the impact of district and school policies on their families
 - E. ~~Quality and affordability of childcare, childhood education and professional development programs in public schools~~
 - F. Opportunities for employment, either as direct employees of the Town and School District or under third-party (independent) contracts with the Town and School District

The primary scope and focus of these efforts should include disadvantages in the aggregated experiences of people of color, where the disadvantage is observed to disproportionately affect this group of people when compared to their proportion of the total population of Hartford residents.

- VII. In this work it is understood that [HCORHCOREI](#) will need to consider factors particular to specific intersections within communities of color. In this regard, intersectionality³ describes issues faced by individuals who identify as people of color in addition to representing other historically oppressed people such as women, people of native heritage, LGBTQ+⁴, people with disabilities, etc., and those identifying as any combination of the above.

Terms

Committee members shall serve two-year terms beginning on the date of appointment which may be renewed up to three times for a total of six years at the discretion of the Selectboard and School Board. Time served on the first (ad-hoc) [HCORHCOREI](#), beginning for founding members April 4th, 2017, will count towards the first term.

Constitution

This advisory committee will be constituted of [sevensine](#) members comprised of [onetwo](#) Selectboard member, [onetwo](#) Schoolboard member and five community members who will represent both Selectboard and Schoolboard. Each member will have equal weight in discussion and voting. The Committee will elect its own Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk. [Applicants for up to two seats on HCOREI may reside outside of Hartford.](#)

Selection Process

Vacancies will be filled through a two-step process. 1. [HCORHCOREI](#) will vote to recommend applicants to the Selectboard and Schoolboard. 2. These recommendations will be ratified or rejected by a vote of each the Selectboard and the Schoolboard.

Statutory Requirements

³ See Kimberlé Crenshaw, "[Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics](#)". In References

⁴ See KW Counselling Services, "What Does LGBTQ+ Mean?" in References

As with all Hartford Subcommittees, the Hartford Committee on [Social Inequity Racial Equity and Inclusion](#) must operate in accordance with the Statutes of the State of Vermont and the Ordinances and Policy of the Town of Hartford. In particular, all meetings will be warned and open to the public and the minutes of these meetings will be recorded and posted in accordance with Vermont's [Open Meeting Law](#).

References

1. *"Social inequity" is understood to be "disparities in power and wealth, often accompanied by discrimination, social exclusion, poverty and low wages, lack of affordable housing, exposure to hazards and community social decay."*
Alameda County Public Health Department, *Life And Death From Unnatural Causes*, (August 2008),
<http://www.acphd.org/data-reports/reports-by-topic/social-and-health-equity/life-and-death-from-unnatural-causes.aspx>
2. *"In life, when two things are not equal, it just means that they are not the same—by itself, this says nothing about whether or not this difference is fair. To better understand inequalities, one must talk about equities and inequities. Inequity means that the difference between two things is unfair... The real problem arises in determining whether an inequality is equitable, inequitable, or neutral in its fairness."*
Dussault, Nicole, (March 27, 2013). "Equity and equality", *Columbia Spectator*,
<https://www.columbiaspectator.com/2011/11/02/equity-and-equality/>
3. Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1989). ["Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics"](#). *University of Chicago Legal Forum, special issue: Feminism in the Law: Theory, Practice and Criticism*. University of Chicago Law School: 139–168.
4. KW Counselling Services, "What Does LGBTQ+ Mean?", *OK2BME*, (March 2018),
<https://ok2bme.ca/resources/kids-teens/what-does-lgbtq-mean/>