

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
January 30, 2018 Meeting**

SPECIAL MEETING

**This is a special joint meeting of the District 97, District 200 and District 90 boards held at the
Roosevelt Middle School Multi-Purpose Room located at
7560 Oak Avenue, River Forest, IL 60305**

President Spurlock called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Spurlock, Liebl, Broy, and Datta
Absent: Breymaier, Spatz and O'Connor
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier, board members from District 90, District 200, the River Forest Library and Village Board's, and Rodney Thomas, Linda Ponce Deleon and Kathy Osta from the National Equity Project

ROLL CALL

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ralph Martine shared opening statements and welcomed everyone to this learning session.

NATIONAL EQUITY PROJECT LEARNING EVENT

Kathy Oasta, Rodney Thomas and Linda Ponce Deleon from the National Equity Project (NEP) introduced themselves, and shared their mission and a brief history of NEP. They explained that the process this evening is meant to build a shared language and skill for talking about and working toward equity in each district and community.

LEARNING
SESSION ON
EQUITY

Several activities were led, asking where everyone grew up, what kind of students they were in high school, and how that impacted their ideas on education now. They were asked how they identify racially and how that impacts their experience in the community. The participants were encouraged to move around the room answering each question and noting that they are each the expert of their personal story.

During the activities, participants were asked to;

- Notice moments of discomfort and stay curious
- Listen fully with ears, eyes and heart
- Speak their truth without blame or judgement
- Be open to the experience of this session and each other

NEP led a listening activity to focus on being a constructive listener. The participants broke up into pairs and were asked to listen to the other tell their story for two minutes without interjecting. It was noted that sharing can be a healing process for some and that people are capable of solving their own problems. Additionally, it was noted that cognitive and affective processing can increase understanding. It was noted that over time, this type of communication could build friendships and trust.

It was suggested that before people can do the work, they need to define what they are doing. Therefore, the definition of equity was shared as promoting just and fair inclusion, and creating conditions in which everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

It was noted that any system produces what it was designed to produce. Cards containing different pictures and caption explaining the picture were distributed. Participants were asked to pair up and share how the picture made them feel. Once the pair shared, they were asked to exchange pictures and move on to another partner.

It was suggested that all levels of a system must be addressed (individual, institutional and structural).

The word situatedness was shared, suggesting that people, families and young people are situated differently socially, physically, and culturally. It was suggested that decisions need to be considered that take into consideration the situatedness of people.

Implicit Bias was defined as the process of associating stereotypes or attitudes towards categories of people without conscious awareness. It was suggested that the unconscious mind is most of what is going on in our minds. The unconscious mind is where most decision and action take place. It was noted that the brain takes in about 11,000,000 pieces of information a second with the brain only being aware of about 40-50 of them.

The participants were asked to consider how what they are absorbing now affects how they respond. Several examples were shared (police officers, standards for dress in a professional woman, etc.), and it was suggested that people make decisions that are at odds with their bias and goals.

It was suggested that people need to put structures in place that build equity and counteract implicit bias. Suggestions included;

- 1) Create human connections
 - Children if they feel connected are more likely to learn
- 2) Recognize what is going on, calm your “lizard brain” and prime it with an intention
 - Calm it with a stereotype replacement
- 3) Creating new narratives and using counteracting tools intentionally
 - Minority, disadvantaged, transfers, other
 - Consider our students
- 4) Change the structure

Datta left the meeting around 8:20 p.m.

Handouts were shared that included structures that can be put in place to help people with every decision they make. It was suggested that all decision be run through this filter.

COMMENTS

COMMENTS

Participants were asked to share one thing that they are either going to do or think more about because of this class.

Concern was expressed that there were no students or educators in the room. It was noted that all three school districts have been doing work in this area independently that includes student and educator voices.

It was noted that the School Boards are trying to change the system, but it is a difficult process and will take time. The leaders were commended for their efforts, and concern was express by a District 90 board member about the need to put structures in place that will ensure that the next superintendent and board members will follow through with the work being done in this area. Student 6 was used as an example of how new teachers at Chapel Hill are being taught what they need to know by student leaders. It was suggested that there must be student involvement when the structure needs to change and participants were asked to be intentional as to the students who are chosen to participate.

The book, *Making up a Second Ghetto* by Arnold R. Hirsch was recommended, noting that there is never any guarantee of victory in history. Participants were encouraged to commit to loving, serving, and understanding each other, recognizing that they are far more alike than different.

ADJOURNMENT

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There being no further business to conduct, President Spurlock declared the meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary