



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

New Haven Board of Education Teaching and Learning Committee
July 15, 2020 4:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

Virtual Zoom Meeting Minutes

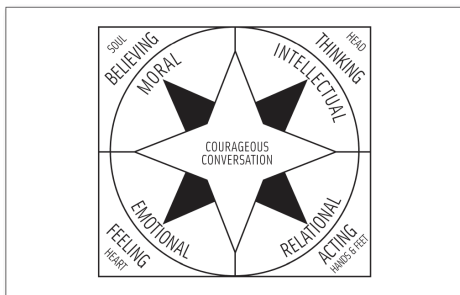
-In attendance: NHBOE members: Chair: **Dr. Edward Joyner, Larry Conaway,** NHBOE: Superintendent of Schools **Dr. Iline Tracey,** Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment **Ivelise Velazquez,** Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Leadership **Dr. Paul Whyte,** Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Leadership **Keisha Redd-Hannans,** HSC Principal **Matthew Brown,** District School Climate Coordinator **Carolyn Ross-Lee,** Director of Research, Assessment and Evaluation **Dr. Michele Sherban,** Director of English Learners **Pedro Mendia-Landa,** Director of Early Learning **Pamela Augustine-Jefferson,** Director of Athletics and Physical Education **Erik Patchofsky,** Supervisor of English Language Arts **Lynn Brantley,** Supervisor of Mathematics **Ken Mathews,** Supervisor of Science **Dr. Richard Therrien,** Supervisor of Social Studies **Sandra Clark,** Supervisor Performing & Visual Arts **Ellen Maust,** Supervisor Professional Learning **Tessa Gumbs-Johnson,** Supervisor of English Learners **Rosalyn Diaz-Ortiz, Public: Sally Espisito,** others

"The Teaching & Learning Committee shall focus on matters of teaching and learning strategy, including curriculum and instruction practices, talent initiatives, school portfolio management and wraparound initiatives which are designed to support student learning and district responsibilities. "

-Dr. Joyner, chair called the meeting to order at 4:30, Dr. Joyner started by thanking Dr. Therrien for doing the liaison job, welcomed Ivelise Velazquez as assistant superintendent and new liaison. He welcomed Larry Conaway as co-chair, started by thanking all teachers, custodians, paras, and staff for their work. He thanked Dr. Tracey for patience creativity, intellect, leadership and ethics in leading us in this time of crisis. He reviewed meeting protocols, Dr. Joyner is responsible for facilitating dialogue and order, Larry Conaway helping with time. Ms. Velazquez is host, Dr. Therrien is taking minutes. Only speak when recognized, no public comment, please follow up with Board members and staff if questions. He emphasized that Board members make policy and NHPS staff follow through with practice.

-Dr. Joyner introduced the first topic by asking the question: *What protocols ensure productive dialogue regarding equity and outcomes for students of diverse races, languages, abilities and economic backgrounds?*

Figure 2.1 The Courageous Conversation Compass



Courageous Conversations on Race, Equity and Diversity. from Singleton, G. E. & Linton, C. (2005). Courageous conversations about race: A field guide for achieving equity in schools. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Ivelise Velazquez, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment as lead of the District Equity Leadership Team committee for the district, and a certified trainer for courageous conversations, described the work of the committee.

Caroline Ross-Lee explained the that the DELT team started with foundational training around race/equity, that is the foundational training and will be inviting other administrators and staff to

participate in training. She described the use of the courageous conversation compass that can help lead us in an activity around race, A group could ask any question and it can be looked at from a perspective along the four points of the compass: moral, intellectual, emotional, relational. It helps people realize the main point of where you are coming from in the conversations. An example was given, knowing that we are working in an under-resourced district, we might have a conversation around budget and resource. Some may come from the point of view of emotional about what is doing to our students, some may be more intellectual along the budget numbers. So we are coming at it from different perspectives, the compass use is a way of making the conversation more productive. The point is to move towards the center and be more balanced.

Matt Brown, principal of HSC, co-chair of DELT committee described how HSC started a race education group to delve into some of these race equity issues. We are all coming at it from different points of view, and we may feel like we aren't taking to each other folks understand each other and coming closer. He described it as very helpful for the teaching staff, also for conversations that are having at home.

Dr. Joyner commented on the importance of a framework like this, but wanted to know where we are going with this from here. He also pointed out that we need to also look at it from a historical context, there is only one race but many ethnicities. Scientifically there is not a real basis for race but historically we have focused on complexion. We deal in this country with many myths and anti-intellectual positions around race. We need to get the lies out of our heads to make room for more truths.

Dr Tracey agreed with the view that in our school system we are one human race, behind the ideas of race is that one group is ahead of or puts down another group.

Ms. Velazquez repeats the point about that there is no biology that points to race.. The reason we are taking about the social construct of race is that humans have made it up. We do have to look at it in order to understand how it is used and misused.

Mr. Conaway expressed that we need a basic cultural and ethnic literacy, those are the things that kids need to understand. The myriad of differences and that people look at things differently , we need to include racial and cultural literacy in our school and to celebrate the differences.

Dr. Joyner: we really do need to make sure that the district has a comprehensive glossary a definition of terms and shared meanings.

Mr. Brown and Ms. Ross-Lee agreed that is how we get to the definitions of race Terms such as prejudice, discrimination and racism also have different definitions.

Mr. Brown talked about how we all live in the four different quadrants at different times. But what we have to do is try and focus on how we prepare our teachers, HSC is like a lot of our schools predominantly white staff with students kids of color who are coming from a strong emotional quadrant whilst educators approach from intellectual/moral quadrant, especially with recent events. The compass really helps to define the entry points and it has been a really helpful tool for bridging that framework for having the conversations

Dr. Joyner, what we are really trying to solve are issues of prejudice and how we understand all acts of prejudice (groups against each other). The historical context and taxonomy is important, it will give you a better way to talk about racial prejudice. Sally Espisto, member of public (former teacher) was thanked, also one of the trainers for Courageous Conversations. Ken Mathews and others from NHPS also went through training 10 years ago.

Ms. Velazquez summarized that educators need to understand impacts of race in education, because our outcomes are divided by the social constructs of race and promised to update the Board on future work.

Overview of the State's Reopening Plan, *Adapt, Advance, Achieve* reopening plan by Dr. Iline Tracey, Ms. Hannans, Ms. Velazquez and Curriculum Supervisors

Given NHPS unique circumstances, how is the district preparing to teach students and keep them safe along the three levels of risk described by the state?

Dr. Joyner described how all should have pre read the reopening report from the [CT State Department of Education "Adapt, Advance, Achieve"](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/CTReopeningSchools.pdf). <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/CTReopeningSchools.pdf> .

Reference was also made to the [New Haven Tiger Team draft Reopening Plan](https://www.nhps.net/Page/793) <https://www.nhps.net/Page/793> and the [one-pager on NHPS Instructional Models](#) included in the meeting materials.

Dr. Tracey described how the CT State Department of Education had asked all school systems to come up with three plans. The low risk option was for all students to attend 5 days a week, but allowed for parents to opt out of that and use distance learning at home. We have sent a survey to all parents and gotten wide participation. Across the system, between 40 and 50% percent of parents said they would opt for staying at home/distance learning. So, even though we have to plan for all students back in school buildings, we also have to follow the guidance of accommodating students at home at the same time.

The moderate risk option would be that schools open but under hybrid rotation to include a bit of distance learning and some in-school. In this model the school system decides who physically attends. Prek-5 would attend 4 days a week and one day at home with remote learning, they would be split in the school into two groups. Grades 6-12 would physically attend school 2 days a week and 3 days of remote learning, and split into two groups that rotate. In the moderate risk option, teachers would have one planning day a week as well. Under this option, students could also opt to do full at home distance learning.

The third option would be full distance learning for all. For all the distance learning, certified teachers would conduct distance learning through Google Meets/Classroom, including live classroom instruction, interactive videos and lessons. Daily attendance would be expected

We also want to make sure that distance or hybrid lessons are meaningful and coherent across the district, to make sure learning is consistent across schools/teachers. Ms. Velazquez has been asked to look at that with curriculum supervisors.

We would have to go with the low risk until the state decides something else. There has been objection from some parents/community groups and teacher unions to the low risk plan across the state. We also know the commissioner is having a meeting possibility of reducing the 180 day requirement.

All of the models have problems, we know especially for distance learning high school students can be disengaged. We also still have issues of technological access, hotspots, computer devices. We piloted something in the Newhville neighborhood, but there were still gaps in the hot spots.

Thus this comprehensive Tiger Team plan that we have could flip in any direction, depending on the virus and the state directives.

Mr. Conaway, So this trend of 50/50 for low risk A forces a hybrid similar to B anyway by the parents/students choice.

Ms. Hannans agreed that this also helps us with the social distancing if only 50% shows up.

Mr. Conaway points out the difference between social distancing and physical distancing, we want to be socially close and physically apart.

Dr. Joyner commends the district on the proactive planning. He is concerned that this virus really magnifies issues of privilege and poverty He doesn't think this will happen by top down mandates, and there is a problem asking us to do things and not pay for it. Board may have a responsibility to speak up on this and stand up for what we think makes sense for our students.

Dr. Tracey shared that we have also created a family guide with a question and answer section that we will be sending them out. She is also aware were some community groups today participating in a press conference around reopening,. Other superintendents are pushing back hard. The other concern is that we are going to experience a shortage of teachers, some are compromised and will be using ADA to not put themselves in harm's way, which is their right.

Dr. Joyner stated we will support you and not do something that puts teachers in harm's way.

Mr. Conaway pointed out that we have to have flexibility, we may have blind spots around things such as attendance, teachers lessons, coverage, etc.. We need to be aware of blind spots. State may not be cognizant of all the possible disruptions, asking kids to wear masks, what do we do with defiant students, etc..

Dr. Tracey describes that in terms of funding we may have 8.5 million in CARES act but limited in use. The state might have kept back money in another COVID 19 fund that might be accessible. We haven't applied yet, it may open on the 17h. We are sending them some projected costs from Mr. Penn and facilities.

Mr. Conaway asks about the grant writer position (put on hold for now), asks the Board gets copies of the funding issues and Grants requests.

Ms. Velazquez also assured that the curriculum supervisors are preparing detailed plans about the quality of the instruction, curriculum, adherence to plans for the models of reopening and have specifics for each area of curriculum and grade levels. Those ideas will be at top of the next meeting.

Strategic Planning Update: *What district mission, vision, priorities and goals will drive the work of educators, parents and students starting in 2020-2021?*

Dr. Tracey wants the committee to look at it so that it goes through next board, Dr. Sherban is prepared to talk about Strategic Planning.

Dr. Sherban says the committee had broad representation across community, teachers, parents, etc.. This was a multi-year undertaking, continued work from Dr. Garcia-Blocker in 2016-18, under Dr. Birks in 19-20 with Dr. Tracey leading it. All that work was honored.

She described the areas of the draft of the [NHPS 2020-2024 Strategic Plan: Learn, Achieve, Rise](#)

She described the vision: Our vision is to be a premier urban school district that ensures access to equitable opportunities and successful outcomes for all students as they prepare for college, career, and life.

Mission: To provide all students in New Haven Public Schools with personalized, authentic, and engaging learning experiences through creativity, exploration, innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, and high quality instruction. To foster a culture of continuous improvement through collaborative

partnerships with staff, families, and the New Haven community. To support students' growth and development by utilizing the Whole Child Framework.

She described the 4 core values: Equitable opportunities, A Culture of Continuous Improvement, High Expectations and Collaboration and partnerships.

The five priority areas are similar to previous plans: Academic Learning, Culture and Climate, Youth and Family Engagement, Talented Educators, and Operational Efficiencies.

There are 5 overarching goals, all with specifics for student achievement: Strong Foundation in Early Learning, High Achievement for All Learners, Development of the Whole Child, Preparation for College, Career & Life, Commitment to Equity, Growth and Progress

As a strategic plan this will drive the business of the district, so what we do in all aspects should be driven by these goals and priorities.

She further showed how student achievement is at center, with each of the priority areas around it. Each of the priority areas have multiple indicators and then each indicator branches out to specific action steps and deliverables.

Dr. Joyner expressed that somewhere in the culture and climate area there should be something specific to the Board of Education itself.

Dr. Tracey indicates some of the student achievement data will continue to be tweaked and finalized.

Dr. Tracey expresses a desire to finalize this with the Board soon. (she's been working on it for a long time) and then will follow with a year by year Action Plan after this.

Dr. Joyner thanks Dr. Sherban and Typhanie Jackson, Director of Student Services, for leading the work recently.

Memorialization and Multicultural Content Across the Curriculum

How does NHPS use content and pedagogy to affirm students' identities and assist them to learn about the culture of others?

Dr. Joyner introduces the topic. He talks about what memorials are, and how to help our kids understand the history of peoples in this country. We have to understand trials and tribulations of the various people that have come to this country, we have to learn about each other, respect each other's troubles and come around a common ideal. Make the Statue of Liberty true for everyone who comes to these shores. It wasn't true for African Americans, Italian Americans experienced pain and suffering as did most immigrant group. There have been books written about experiences of immigrants in New Haven that we all should read. He described some of the issues around this. Discussed the importance of Italian immigrants and similar experiences to the curriculum.

He explained that this will also be discussed in the NHBOE Governance Committee about who we memorialize, based on historical facts. We need to use pedagogy to make everyone understand that everyone has trials and tribulations and make sure it is also a part of our curriculum. He is looking forward to discussing with Ms. Velazquez.

Next Agenda (Aug 19, 2020)

What items should be at the top of the next agenda (curriculum supervisor report on reopening), and especially what policies are needed around any of the issues.

Discussion on possible agenda items:

- Update on reopening,
- Equity discussion,
- Multicultural content including an update from Ms. Clark on Latino/African American studies, and Dr. Joyner mentioned inviting certain community members,
- Dr. Whyte reminded that at some point there may need to be a revisit to international and other field trips.
- Dr. Velazquez expresses thanks for the general themes that have come out of the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:02 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Therrien

Future meetings 20-21: Aug 19, Sep 16, Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 16, Jan 20, Feb 17, Mar 17, Apr 21, May 19, Jun 16