

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education
Climate, Culture & Equity Special Committee
MINUTES
March 4, 2019
6:00 p.m., Education Building Room 223

Board of Education Members Present:

- Barbara Burke*, Committee Chair
- Andrea Bramer*
- Leah Crowley*
- Lida Calvert-Hayes*
- Deanna Kaplan
- Malishai Woodbury

Other

- Pam Peoples-Joyner, Winston-Salem Police Department
- David Sisk, Title III Director, WS/FCS
- Shannon Dobson, IBEST Team, WS/FCS
- Layla Garms, Winston-Salem Foundation
- Kenneth Simington, Interim Superintendent, WS/FCS
- Kellie Easton, Action4Equity
- Wendy Poteat Spicer, Forsyth Promise
- Chuck Spong, Love Out Loud
- Juan Aguilar, Hispanic League
- Carolyn Highsmith, Coalition for Equity in Public Education
- Karen Roseboro, Instructional Superintendent, WS/FCS

*Voting member of the committee

Committee Chair Barbara Burke called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m. and asked committee members to introduce themselves. Ms. Burke shared that the intent is to look at the data to set the stage around climate, culture, and equity.

Mr. Andy Kraft presented the data around achievement, discipline, and attendance. He clarified that tonight's presentation focuses on three subgroups: African-American, Hispanic, and White.

His presentation may be found [here](#).

He started with an overview of the ESSA Accountability Model, which includes the federally approved factors for school performance grades.

Mr. Kraft shared the current trend data around the performance of the subgroups over the last several years in 3rd grade reading end-of grade assessment.

Ms. Lida Calvert-Hayes asked what is the cutoff for proficiency. Mr. Kraft explained that the scores are broken into 5 levels, and a score in levels 3-5 is considered proficient.

Mr. Kraft shared more details of 3rd grade proficiency in additional subgroups.

Then, he shared the composite data of gaps over time for all assessed areas in all grade levels.

Mr. Kraft clarified that the gap between subgroups has not diminished over time in reading.

The district saw some closure from 2015-16 to 2016-17 in Math I. The district also had favorable results from 2014-15 to 2016-17 in Biology.

Ms. Easton asked what happened in science that resulted in such gains. Mr. Kraft deferred to the science experts for further consultation.

Mr. Kraft indicated that the subgroup data disaggregated by gender indicates that African-American males show the lowest achievement level.

Mr. Kraft showed the data for the 6 largest districts in the state, including the overall performance and gaps. The gap exists in all systems.

Mr. Kraft moved on to show the discipline data for the last three years. Based on the data, African-American males far outnumber the incidents reported for each of the last three years. He also shared the total number of days of suspension. The same disproportionality exists and is clear.

Mr. Kraft also shared the number of absences by subgroup for 2017-18. The percentage of absences is fairly consistent with the percentage of students in the overall population. However, the data surrounding tardies indicated that African-American students were tardy a higher percentage of time.

Mr. Kraft went on to review the District Imperatives:

- Gap Goal
- Discipline Goal
- Balanced Literacy
- Quality Lesson Plans
- Effective Professional Learning Teams

Mr. Kraft shared the success stories of gap closing at Gibson Elementary and Clemmons Middle. Gibson is using the MTSS model with fidelity as well as providing strong core instruction.

Ms. Hightower asked about replication of successful strategies.

Ms. Crowley shared that after-school tutoring and the mentoring program.

Ms. Hightower indicated that the assignment plan may impact success.

Mr. Spong asked about the components of Balanced Literacy. Mr. Kraft indicated that Balanced Literacy has 6 specific components that address the way students learn to read.

Ms. Highsmith shared that Balanced Literacy does not have adequate focus on phonetics. How will English Language Learners learn in a second language?

Dr. Simington stressed that phonics is part of daily instruction.

Ms. Easton asked if that is already being done, and Dr. Simington responded affirmatively.

Ms. Bramer clarified that only some schools are implementing structured literacy.

Ms. Easton and Ms. Hightower indicated that what has been done for years is not working, and something has to change. Dr. Simington indicated that we are always looking for new ways of doing things.

Ms. Easton asked what the barriers are to literacy. Dr. Simington indicated that it would be difficult to quantify. The district is working on the fidelity of implementation as well as the resources available to teachers and students. The district also needs quality professional development to allow teachers to perform at a high level.

Ms. Bramer added that early intervention is crucial.

Ms. Easton clarified that the achievement gap hasn't closed. In business, we look at revenue to determine what is being done wrong or needs to be done differently. Is that happening? Dr. Simington responded that we are constantly looking at possible revisions.

Ms. Highsmith asked if the district is looking at the kids.

Ms. Calvert-Hayes thinks that it is important to look at programs that are working and having positive results. She doesn't see the complete circle of deleting programs that aren't working.

Ms. Highsmith asked if there is an evaluative component to chosen programs. Dr. Simington responded that the programs chosen are generally research-based and required to provide evidence of success to use federal funds.

Ms. Burke thanked Mr. Kraft for his presentation, and she introduced Dr. Karen Roseboro to share a comparative overview of equity plans in other districts.

Her presentation may be found [here](#).

Dr. Roseboro shared the 7 key areas for school districts to consider based on The Committee on Racial Equity:

1. Resegregation as it relates to student assignment
2. Discipline Disparities
3. Opportunity/Achievement Gap
4. Overrepresentation of students of color in special education
5. Access to rigorous courses and programs
6. Diversity in teaching
7. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Dr. Roseboro shared an overview of the equity plan in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, which includes aspects of culture, curriculum, and instruction.

She shared the focus areas of the Office of Equity Affairs in Durham Public Schools.

Dr. Roseboro shared the excitement of the Barbershop Talk Series, where staff members literally make presentations in barbershops. They also have “laundromat” days, where presentations are made in laundromats and the bill is paid by donation of the company.

Dr. Roseboro indicated that Wake County Public Schools created an Office of Equity Affairs on 2013, and she shared their focus areas.

She stated that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools have adopted an Equity Policy that includes 5 “Equity Levers.” They also have an Equity Advisory Panel, which is similar to the committee convened by WS/FCS.

Dr. Roseboro shared that Guilford County Schools has an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which includes a director of early literacy and an equity specialist.

Dr. Roseboro indicated the work that the district has started around Equity, Access, and Acceleration. She provided the definitions established by the district as follows:

- **Equity** is offering and providing educational opportunities to all students regardless of their zip code.
- **Access** focuses on removing barriers to opportunities for all students.
- **Acceleration** focuses on allowing students to move through traditional educational structures more rapidly based on need and potential.

She also shared the 4 pillars of need for addressing equity issues in the district:

- Equity in Accelerated Opportunities and Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Equity in Family and School Partnerships
- Equitable Access to Experiential and Extended Learning Opportunities
- Equitable Access to Social, Emotional and Academic Connections

Dr. Roseboro outlined the roles that have been recommended for inclusion in the Office of Equity:

- Executive Director
- Title III ELL Education
- African-American Male Initiative Coordinator
- AIG/Magnet
- Community/Family Engagement
- Integrated Behavioral Education Support Team
- Exceptional Children

Ms. Highsmith asked why the office would not be elevated to the level of Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Roseboro said that could be considered.

Ms. Woodbury clarified that the Executive Director would be a highly specialized position that might fit under a superintendent-level position.

Dr. Roseboro added additional district considerations, including the possibility of a 5th pillar for Equity in Facilities and Operations.

A community member asked if the district would be following a previously demonstrated model. Dr. Roseboro indicated that Minneapolis schools are quite similar to WS/FCS and successful as well as Wake County. She shared that a team visited St. Lucie, Florida, and the group learned a lot from the experience.

Ms. Easton stated that Guilford's definition is measurable, which the current district definition is not. Dr. Roseboro shared that the definition was preliminary, and she expects that the committee will review and revise the definition as it sees fit.

Ms. Woodbury shared that the leadership development programs and initiatives in Guilford County Schools has been a deliberate and intentional effort to include various stakeholders.

A community member asked if there would be a training specialist. Dr. Roseboro clarified that the organizational chart reflects departments with several people employed.

Ms. Highsmith expressed concern about the organization chart, which doesn't reflect anything new except for a couple of positions.

A community member stated that we need to be a little more real with our community. Dr. Roseboro indicated that we need a starting point and to get something started.

Ms. Calvert-Hayes likes the idea of learning from someone who is trained. The city is ready for this. We can really make a go and get something rolling.

Ms. Peoples-Joyner indicated that keeping real includes that the children are going home. It's not always the school's responsibility; the parents have a role too. Many of them are going home to video games or to sell drugs.

Ms. Easton shared that's why we're here. We have to separate the issues so that we can work together to improve the situation.

Ms. Crowley asked about the inclusion of after-school programs.

A community member asked to hear from the representative from the Hispanic side of things. Mr. Aguilar shared that the Hispanic League serves 9 schools and their ELL students. When he first stepped into a classroom, he quickly saw what was underneath. He saw all of the barriers to classroom performance. There is a gap regarding education itself. Newcomers have a different mindset around appreciating education. He's been focusing on fundamentals and seeing things differently. He goes above and beyond to support the students in need.

Mr. Sisk thinks the voice of the Hispanic families is a valid concern. There are language, cultural, and economic barriers.

Ms. Highsmith asked if we need a comprehensive K-12 multicultural curriculum for the system. Ms. Woodbury thinks that we can use Guilford as a model.

Ms. Burke thanked Dr. Roseboro for her presentation.

She indicated that the conversation will continue at the next meeting, when the committee will discuss plans.

On motion by Ms. Bramer and second by Ms. Crowley, Ms. Burke adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.