

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education
Climate, Culture & Equity Special Committee
MINUTES
April 1, 2019
6:00 p.m., Education Building Room 219

Board Committee Members Present

- Barbara Burke, Committee Chair
- Leah Crowley

Other Committee Members Present

- Shannon Dobson, IBEST Team, WS/FCS
- Carolyn Highsmith, Coalition for Equity in Public Education
- Pam Peoples-Joyner, Winston-Salem Police Department
- Karen Roseboro, Instructional Superintendent, WS/FCS

High School Student Representatives

- Harrison Andrews, Atkins A&T High School
- Rebeca Coreas Zaldana, North Forsyth High School
- Molly Mullane, Reagan High School
- Asiaun Sales, Carver High School
- Willie Wilson, Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy

High School Teacher Representatives

- Heather Barto-Wiley, Reynolds High School
- Emily Casey, Parkland IB High School
- Heather Hahn, Walkertown High School
- Barbara Hurdle, Glenn High School
- Tabetha Mabe, Paisley IB Magnet
- Elizabeth Morgan, East Forsyth High School
- Melvin Palmer, Carver High School
- Cecelia Tolliver, Carver High School

Ms. Barbara Burke called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. and provided an overview of the evening's panel discussion. Dr. Karen Roseboro served as moderator and invited students to introduce themselves.

Question #1: What programs are in place that emphasizes respect for or an awareness of diversity?

Ms. Rebeca Coreas Zaldana: Our school has Key Club, which did a support drive after the hurricane. It helps students feel like they fit in.

Ms. Molly Mullane: Our school has Students against Poverty, which provides a food bank.

Mr. Harrison Andrews: Atkins is a full magnet and all students choose to go there, and we have a very diverse population. We also have Key Club and a Gender and Sexuality Alliance Club.

Mr. Willie Wilson: WSPA has no specific program; however, we do have ESL students from around the world. We have new administrators, who are trying to rebuild and bring programs in the future.

Ms. Asiaun Sales: Carver has a club that discusses problems of the world. We also have Golden Circle. Students work with people in the community and bring perishable foods. We have a partnership with MSMS and the Rams program, which provides mentoring from WSSU.

Question #2: How is your school viewed in the larger community?

Ms. Zalana: North Forsyth is in a very diverse location in the community. It is perceived as not a perfect school or where someone would want to go; however, NAF is taking us to a brighter future.

Mr. Andrews: People see Atkins as a “nerdy” school, and we do highly excel in academics. We are called the “Nerd Herd.”

Ms. Mullane: People see Reagan as farmers or agriculturally driven. We also excel in academics. People talk about “Pfafftown Pride.”

Ms. Sales: Carver Nation is undermined in community. People don’t know how much we have to offer. The Academy of Hospitality and Tourism has allowed students to have great careers. We could have better reputation if people would give us a chance.

Mr. Wilson: People give us a bad reputation due to previous conflicts. We’re really a great school. We are known for athletics, specifically basketball and football. Administrators try to get students to college and counselors push you to apply. We are trying to rebuild the reputation of the school.

Question #3: Do you feel safe at your school? What makes you feel safe?

Mr. Andrews: Yes, our SRO is always visible during the school day. He is always available and accepting of students. Administrators are always in hallways and there to help students. Students feel safe knowing there are adults there to support them.

Ms. Sales: Our school has a small population and teachers form great relationships with students. We can talk to teachers about anything, physical or emotional.

Ms. Mullane: Our SRO is visible, and administrators are present in the hallways.

Ms. Zalana: Administrators are visible and teachers are in halls during class change.

Mr. Wilson: We have a female SRO, and she talks to students about problems. In the cafeteria, she prevents incidents from happening. She controls crowds well. Administrators walk around checking classrooms, and teachers care.

Question #4: What three adjectives would describe your school?

Ms. Sales: (1) Warm. I feel safe talking to teachers, and they know her by name. (2) Underrated. People tend to look at us in a bad light. If you visit, you'll see. (3) Growing. We have lots of new programs, like dual enrollment at FTCC.

Ms. Zalana: (1) Comfortable. Teachers make you feel welcome, so do students. (2) Bright. NFHS has a brighter future with NAF and medicine. (3) Fun. It's a fun school with amazing opportunities.

Ms. Mullane: (1) Driven. We offer tutoring after school and have a great environment for learning. (2) Helpful. Teachers want students to succeed. (3) Pride. We have lots of students at events.

Mr. Andrews: (1) Welcoming. All are welcome, and we have an open school. It's nice to know you're accepted. (2) Growing. Population has significantly increased, and majors have been added. (3) Competitive. Our school is competitive academically and athletically. Everyone tries to succeed.

Mr. Wilson: (1) Opportunistic. School offers chances to go to Career Center. (2) Passion. We take pride and joy in everything. At basketball games, we have a packed student section. (3) Determined. The school is determined to do better. Students are trying to get their grades up and stay out of trouble.

Question #5: Are you getting the same opportunities as other schools?

Ms. Zalana: No, I don't think so. We don't have the same opportunities as bigger, better schools.

Ms. Sales: We are not given as much opportunity; we create our own opportunities. Students have moved or been assigned to other schools. We don't get enough money for textbooks or other things that some schools may have. However, our faculty goes above and beyond.

Mr. Wilson: It's not that we're not given opportunities; sometimes it's the students who don't want to take AP courses. We are limited by those people who don't want to do certain things. Counselors share the opportunities available and encourage us. We have same chances, but more students need to take advantage of what's available.

Mr. Andrews: Yes and no. We have lots of AP classes, and we keep adding. Atkins offers 7 different majors that are not offered anywhere else in district.

Ms. Mullane: Yes, we have AP courses and internships. We have opportunities to take advantage of what's offered. For example, I am on the newspaper staff.

Question #6: What are some suggestions for improvement that the district should consider for all high schools?

Ms. Zalana: Don't leave NF in the dark or in the back. You could be giving us more money for our school for textbooks and technology.

Ms. Sales: We need more equality. Because we have fewer students, we have fewer opportunities. We need more community support. No school should be perceived as “less.” The district must understand challenges.

Mr. Wilson: We need to expand the school. There are only 46 people in my graduating class. We know our teachers, making us more known. If it was open to more people, that would be good.

Mr. Andrews: We need more classroom materials. For some AP classes, we have no actual textbook. We have an online textbook, which is kinda good, kinda bad. We need calculators because some people don't have the finances.

Ms. Mullane: We also need classroom materials. In my math class, we have no textbook, and the teacher must copy pages. You should continue to listen to student voice.

Dr. Roseboro invited committee members to ask questions. No one asked any questions, so Dr. Roseboro thanked the student participants.

Dr. Roseboro invited the teacher panelists to approach and she asked them to introduce themselves.

Question #1: Do you believe teachers are judged on where they teach?

Ms. Cecelia Tolliver: I don't think we are judged on where we teach but on our students' scores. That's not a good snapshot on what I do in the classroom.

Ms. Elizabeth Morgan: We're not judged on where but on one number based on one test.

Ms. Heather Hahn: I do think there is a stigma based on where we teach.

Ms. Heather Barto-Wiley: Reynolds has reputation for being wealthy, but we also serve some of the poorest students.

Ms. Emily Casey: The school is judged. People's reaction is different based on school.

Ms. Barbara Hurdle: People don't realize all of the things about our school and judge accordingly.

Ms. Tabetha Mabe: People don't know that we're a high school and serve grade 6-10. We have best job in county. I serve 110 kids that we know very well. We benefit from being judged on great kids.

Mr. Melvin Palmer: You need to be reminded that the NCFE is a tool that judges teacher effectiveness. We are definitely judged by student performance.

Question #2: Do you believe teacher loads are fair as far as non-proficient students are concerned are fairly distributed?

Ms. Tolliver: At Carver, 97% students were predicted to be a low 1 or 2. School choice has re-segregated schools and created pockets of low-performing students.

Ms. Morgan: I wonder if parents know why they object to certain schools. We need to look at school choice. Some schools are missing out on good students because of reputation.

Ms. Hahn: Few students come in at grade level. It's hard to show increase in proficiency when students come in so far behind.

Ms. Barto-Wiley: I taught an ESL sheltered class. Many students are not going to be proficient when they are learning the language. They work tremendously hard to be better students, which doesn't show up in test scores.

Mr. Casey: There is a big discrepancy between IB and general ed population. It's not an equitable distribution.

Ms. Hurdle: We're talking about something that is set up by people who know nothing about education or what is good for students and education. Looking at growth needs to be lifted up.

Mr. Palmer: People have been moved through the county by an invisible hand. What I've noticed is that the parents have been convinced that Carver is not for their kids. Some may be due to low academics. They're more concerned about athletics and other events. Some schools have more opportunities for campus beautification and improvement. We all need parental support. We don't have much support at all, so we go without. Or, teachers have to stand in the gap and fund activities.

Question #3: What 3 adjectives would you use to describe your school?

Ms. Mabe: (1) Unique. We are a grade 6-10 school. (2) Safe. We know our students well. (3) Challenging. We offer all honors level/IB classes. Students have to work hard.

Mr. Palmer: (1) Leveling up. We are a school on the move. Our athletics, clubs, etc. are reducing in size. We have a lack of parental support.

Ms. Hurdle: (1) Diverse. We have a very diverse student population, which is truly a strength. Students learn to get along with a variety of people. (2) Supportive. We have a great support system in guidance and administration and teachers. Everyone is working to help all students get to where they need to go.

Ms. Casey: (1) Diverse. Our population is just like Glenn. (2) Supportive. However, I have a different reason. We had a teacher who left in middle of year. Teachers took on extra students and/or section to help students have an effective teacher. We weren't going to let students just sit there, and it was a really positive experience. (3) Fun. We are out in the hallways, singing and joking. Kids hate it, but it works.

Ms. Barto-Wiley: (1) Diversity. I get to walk into that beautiful building with children with different challenges and ideas and excitement about education. (2) Supportive. Our teacher community is like a family; we take care of each other. (3) Floundering. We are trying to find our vision for who we are now in this world of test scores. We just care so much about our students.

Ms. Hahn: (1) Growing. We are a new school, developing a sense of community with a new fresh approach. (2) Building. We are a new faculty with young teachers, building the supports we need. (3) Underestimated. We are underestimated by people in community, and kids underestimate themselves. We are building a growth mindset to help students see that they can learn and change the direction of their lives.

Ms. Morgan: (1) Welcoming. We have changing demographics, and lots of students choose to go to EFHS. (2) Big. There are lots of opportunities and the chance to do lots of things. However, I can go for days without seeing some coworkers. There must be some middle ground.

Ms. Tolliver: (1) Driven. We are finding it hard to find our equity. We took a chance on mastery learning. (2) Collaborative. Teachers work tirelessly together on how to support students. (3) Pride. We have lots of pride. Our kids love Carver Nation. However, they only promote negative news, not the positive. People don't know about what is happening at the school.

Question #4: Do you feel safe at school? If so, why?

Ms. Tolliver: I feel safe. We talk about who is missing. Administrators take care of things. Students are very comfortable with us, and they will let us know when something is off.

Ms. Morgan: I think we feel very safe. When I don't feel safe is when we have an intruder drill. We are a large campus with multiple buildings. We need building-specific plans for safety.

Ms. Hahn: I feel safe most days. We have lots of glass at Walkertown. It is a shared campus with middle school. If we get mixed, it might be an issue

Ms. Barto-Wiley: Reynolds is a 22-acre campus. I mostly feel safe. The Parkland shooting really messed with my head. We don't have personnel to watch every entrance, and we have lots of foot traffic near campus. I would say that I feel safe about 80% of the time; however, I am really concerned about safety issues on campus.

Ms. Casey: From day to day I feel incredibly safe. There is always someone around, and kids are comfortable coming to talk to you. There are lots of entrances from outside. When we have a lockdown, it causes nerves definitely after Parkland shooting. A campus-specific plan makes sense.

Ms. Hurdle: I act like I feel safe so that my students feel safe. I convince myself most of the time, but that's a myth. I was assaulted this year by former student who should not have been on campus. It caused me to look more deeply at our school. My building has only 6 classrooms with 2 doors open to a parking lot. We have tried locking doors, but it doesn't always work. I think that something needs done on high school campuses.

Ms. Mabe: I feel safe. We have an older building with lots of entrances. If someone knocks on door, a kid opens the door. Security will be better in new building.

Mr. Palmer: I feel very safe on campus despite gun and knife incidents. Kids have lots of camaraderie. Although there are some challenges, we have a tight knit school.

Question #5: Is it easy for you to get substitutes when needed? What programs are in place in your school that emphasize respect or awareness of diversity?

Ms. Tolliver: It's not usually too hard when the same subs come every day. We haven't had much diversity training.

Ms. Mabe: When you know ahead of time, it's usually pretty easy to find a sub once you have personal numbers. However, just putting them in the system, you never know. Every day we have some that are unfilled. I don't remember any diversity training in recent years.

Ms. Hahn: Subs are an issue; we had a sub just dropped this morning. We have people covering every day. I haven't had any diversity training.

Ms. Barto-Wiley: Same with the subs. Best piece of diversity training was when we went into the community on buses to see where students live. We also watched documentary on low-socioeconomic students. Teachers were in shock about what students might be experiencing.

Ms. Casey: I am new to the district, but teachers asked to cover every day. We saw the same MTSS video. There is an interesting dynamic that results in having trouble getting Paisley students into Parkland IB program. More training would help address bias.

Ms. Hurdle: We have the same trouble with subs. We need trauma-informed training. So many students are in crisis and dealing with so many things. Our guidance provides great support but they can't do it alone.

Ms. Mabe: Subs are a nightmare; teachers cover every day. People don't understand the process, and we need to address that. A few years ago we completed a poverty simulation.

Mr. Palmer: I have a few subs that I go to. We don't really have diversity any longer; we are a 100% minority school. Students get along very well. We loss lots of diversity because we have lost funding, especially for improving campus or other programs

Question #6: Additional questions/comments

Ms. Hurdle: We use "differentiation" a lot in education. Why can't we provide differentiation for our high schools? Our school is different. We need flexibility in our schedule for tutoring, clubs, freshmen, etc.

Dr. Willette Nash asked Ms. Tolliver about the school assignment structure that produces low achievement.

Ms. Tolliver: I found out about how diverse Carver was about 12 years ago, when it had a different student population. All 8 housing projects now come to Carver, which hasn't always been the case. Our students have an opportunity gap. It's a constant battle. We have perpetuated it by allowing student separate out. We don't try to get the students back. When we can't offer AP classes, then we lose students. It's a deficit for our upper level kids.

Mr. Palmer: I would suggest common sense solutions. Not all of our schools have a 60% graduation rate year after year. I know the district has been creative in recent years in developing innovative programs. However, we have lost many new teachers because of the changing direction and strategies. I would like to see someone realize that our principals hold the keys; however, they need autonomy. We don't get the results that we want. When we talk about diversity and inequities, they are obvious throughout the district.

A community member asked about the diversity of the panel. Mrs. Burke shared the Hispanic representatives on the committee.

A community member asked about culturally responsive teaching.

Ms. Tolliver makes an effort to include culturally responsive aspects of African-American culture. We could do better with the Hispanic culture. It shouldn't be limited to a designated month.

Ms. Barto-Wiley responded that we need resources that reflect the students' culture. The best thing we can do is provide appropriate books.

Dr. Nash shared that Mr. Palmer participated in the development of the Cultural Infusion Curriculum.

A community member shared that teachers need more resources for Exceptional Children.

A community member thanked Chair Woodbury for opening the dialogue across the community.

Ms. Peoples-Joyner talked about programs funded by the Winston-Salem Police Foundation. There are partners who are willing to help the schools.

Ms. Highsmith thanked the panel. What we have heard validates many of our thoughts.

A teacher spoke about the Newcomers Academy and the need for additional supports for ESL students. We have limited resources.

A community member spoke about the need to collect the opinions from other stakeholders.

Dr. Nash asked about making the panel diverse in the future.

Ms. Burke thanked the students for their participation and articulation. They shared valuable information for making decisions moving forward. She also thanked the teachers on the panel. She thanked them for their time and for their honesty. She addressed the diversity of the panelists. We will have more panel discussions because every voice matters.

This committee is long overdue. We need to understand how all stakeholders are feeling. We need open, honest conversations. People have been asking to join the committee; however, we are at capacity. At May 6 meeting, we will discuss protocol for community involvement moving forward. Everyone can contribute to the conversation.

The next meeting is on May 6, 2019 at 6 p.m. in Education building Room 223.

Ms. Burke is removing herself as chair and is turning the committee over to Chair Woodbury.

Ms. Woodbury shared that the committee work will move aggressively forward. We want to make sure that the community is involved. We can't do this work alone. We hope to have more conversations in the future. She also thanked the teachers and students for their participation.

Ms. Burke adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.