

Town of Hartford Committee on Racial Equity and Inclusion

Wednesday January 6, 2021

6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

In Attendance: Allene Swienkowski (She/Her), Joe Major (He/Him), Nancy Russell (She/Her), John Hall (He/Him), Sara Campbell (She/Her), Ann Reynolds (She/Her), Russell North (He/Him), Giavanna Munafa (She/Her)

6:00 PM Call to Order

6:05 PM Acknowledge Community Members

- In attendance: Audrey Devost, Kim Souza, Rebecca Whitney, Arnold Thomas

6:01 PM Presentation by Audrey Devost - PHD Student, UCLA; Hartford Resident

- Presentation for an research opportunity - Quantitative Study of School Based Disciplinary Action
- Link to Study application - https://www.aera.net/Portals/38/Education%20Research%20Service%20Projects%20%28ERSP%29%20Call%20and%20Guidelines%20for%202021%20Awards_FINAL0929_1.pdf
- Link to the google doc: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DZw9C-98NaqM2RSIdq30XxSWVwR2y-azl1gsvLHpwns/edit?usp=sharing>
- Study overview:
 - Conduct analysis of school based disciplinary actions recorded as quantitative measures among K-12 schools.
 - Aim to identify disparities based on race, gender, and school level and serve as preliminary analysis to inform future studies and data collection to support HCOREI's charge to recommend anti-bias policies for Hartford School District and the Town of Hartford.
 - Potential to distribute statewide to legislative committees and other districts to inform their decision-making and recommend future studies based on finding.
 - Request to HCOREI
 - Feedback on study proposal
 - Recommendation on funding amount an allocation
 - Recommendation on schedule/time frame
- Discussion for feedback/questions
 - Confidentiality concerns
 - Would be looking at already existing reports on disciplinary actions - not asking for specific contact data beyond race, gender, school level
 - Would need to be approved by both State and local school board
 - Process
 - Should this initiate from HCOREI or the school board?
 - Best practice would be to discuss with superintendent and then go to school board.
 - Refer to the education subcommittee who can review and then bring back to full committee to discuss a formal recommendation to the school board.
 - Scope
 - Are there other areas of study that would be appropriate in addition to disciplinary action? Do teachers/staff have topics they would like to engage in?
 - Researching other schools who have gone through a similar process - what criteria did they use for programs/workshops, vendors used etc.
 - MOTION: Ann moved to remand this to the education subcommittee. Sara seconded. Amended - Remand to the education committee for consultation and advisement and bring back to the full committee for recommendation - Nancy seconded amendment - passed unanimously

6:32 PM Approve Consent Agenda

- MOTION: ANN moves approve minutes 12/16/20 - seconded Nancy - passed unanimously

6:33 PM Annual Assessment for Town

- Deadline was 1/1, Allene submitted - Attached

6:35 PM Discussion - HCOREI Charge and Mission via the lens of "action"

- HCOREI Charge <https://www.hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/1817/HCOREI-Charge-Amended-312019?bidId=>
- Read back from 12/16 minutes -
 - Concern that the committee has gone from an advisory role to an action role. This committee was formed in an advisory role. Agreement that the role of the committee is to make recommendations to the board for them to enact.
 - Discuss the role of the committee - if changes to made to be presented to both boards.
- Discussion -
 - Charge does say gather information and give recommendations but also says "Continuing to work towards a welcoming environment and reducing racial disparities within municipal and school governance." This indicates some action behind the work.
 - Example of action - overseeing implementation of the strategic plan. However, is this an action HCOREI is empowered to take?
 - Example - the RFP - the charge suggested an RFP for a town and school district strategic plan. HCOREI made a recommendation to submit. Only when the boards requested HCOREI develop the RFP were we able to take action on that request.
 - Are there areas in the strategic plan where we can specifically be of service? A letter was sent in May to both boards and the Town Manager asking this question (attached)
 - How should HCOREI utilize the liaisons to both boards on the strategic plan work?
- Put discussion on the charge at the top of the next agenda:
 - What are the actions considered?
 - What actions (if any) can the committee take independently of the two boards? Community building as an example
 - If the committee were to take action in supporting the boards for accountability on the strategic plan what would that action be? What tools would be used?

7:03 PM Subcommittee Breakouts

7:21 PM Return to full committee

- Education
 - Met with HHS students on their work around equity, inclusion and anti-racism. Focusing on using time in advisory to share information, videos and host discussions
 - Suggestion to have student representation on HCOREI - include in discussion on the charge
 - How to get the school board information they need to move forward such as vetted list of regional facilitators that do this work. professionally
 - Next meeting Sunday 1/10
- Policy
 - Breakout conversation on how the school board organizes policies as we look at recommendations for publishing town policies.
 - Met 1/4 and planned meeting 1/11
 - We are planning to reach out to Chief Kasten to let him know about the work our sub-committee of HOREI is doing reviewing and assessing accessibility of Town Policies and Ordinances of different Town departments. We will send him our Mission statement about viewing the Policies and

Ordinances through the lens of racial equity and inclusion; and we will ask respectfully if there is someone in his department whom he would prefer we work with if he does not have the time.

- Housing
 - Initially went to Twin Pines and Vermod to ask questions about how to solve a problem without specifically understanding the problem itself. Want to reach out to both Coach Christie and Xusana Davis to discuss their work on the root of the housing issues

7:30 PM

**Adjournment - Nancy moved to Adjourn
Next Meeting Wednesday, January 20, 6pm**

HARTFORD COMMITTEE ON RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

All people are accorded the right to live in a just, equitable and anti-racist community. This right is only possible if we embrace collective responsibility and support shared prosperity. We advocate for actions that raise the level of awareness within our institutions and promote municipal and school policies that remediate systemic racism. In 2019, the Hartford Committee on Racial Equity and Inclusion (HCOREI) adopted the statement above in order to illuminate the fundamental mission and purpose of the committee as charged by the Town and School District of Hartford, VT.

In this year, the requested RFP resulted in the Strategic Plan completed by Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity, released in April 2020. Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity aligns with the HCOREI mission and purpose that “all people are accorded the right to have to live in a just, equitable and anti-racist community.”

Our committee constitution and membership continues to be collaboratively governed by both the Selectboard and the Hartford School Board. The committee filled the one open seat in May 2020.

Allene E. Swienkowski, Chair

To: Brannon Godfrey, Hartford Town Manager
Tom Debalsi, Superintendent Hartford School District
The Town of Hartford Select Board
The Town of Hartford School Board

From: Hartford Committee on Racial Equity and Inclusion (HCOREI)

May 21, 2020

In reviewing the Findings and Recommendations in the Town and School District of Hartford Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, HCOREI suggests that we formalize HCOREI's involvement and role in the implementation of the Plan. SAs Curtiss Reed suggested in his presentation of the Plan, HCOREI could be useful in making recommendations and monitoring implementation of the Plan. May we request that HCOREI representatives from each Board be members of any subcommittees which might be formed to work on the Strategic Plan; and that the Town and School Boards give quarterly updates on planning timelines, implementation and progress to HCOREI.

Respectfully submitted,

Allene E. Swienkowski
HCOREI Chair