

**BELMONT EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 28, 2021**

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BELMONT, MA**

DATE: December 13, 2021
TIME: 9:10 AM

Present: Mr. Jamal Carlos Saeh, Subcommittee Chair
Ms. Amy Checkoway, Subcommittee Member
Mr. Michael Crowley, Subcommittee Member
Mr. Michael McAllister, Director of Human Capital
Ms. Chon'tel Washington, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm

1. Introduction to the DEI director

Chon'tel Washington, the new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) director, was introduced and provided a brief overview of her first month in the Belmont Public Schools. So far, she attended a leadership council meeting and has been on a listening tour with principals and educators. Starting tomorrow, she will engage in some meet and greet opportunities as well. She is also interested in meeting students. She is also eventually interested in meeting parents and the equity audit consultants. She acknowledged that getting to know the community and carrying out this work will be a process. Subcommittee Member Crowley commented that he is interested in educator hiring, discipline practices, student outcome disparities, and the racial climate in Belmont.

2. Equity audit update

Mr. McAllister provided an update on the equity audit; Phase 1 of the audit has been completed. The report from the consultants was received on September 14 and is currently undergoing review by district staff. The goals of phase 1 included identifying bias language that may contribute to inequities; provide recommendations for more equitable policy language; determine and analyze whether the Special Education Procedural Manual and Belmont Significantly Disproportionality Action Plan aligns with the "Equitable Mindsets, Practices, and Consequences" framework; determine whether these topics in equity are implemented in practice in the classroom and school setting; and make recommendations for improvement in special education policies, practices, and student learning achievement and transitioning experiences.

Findings from the report included that the current policy manual "sparsely considers topics related to equity" and suggests that parental input and participation "should be prioritized, specially outlined, and actively embedded in every section of the manual." There are also recommendations related to a rigorous data collection and storage process and additional training for team chairs.

Ms. Washington will be joining the disproportionality group from last year to discuss the requirements from the state that need to be addressed and ideas that the district should pursue.

A community member (Jason Ketola) asked if the scope involved looking at the consequences of how procedures are implemented within schools versus conceptual. Mr. McAllister clarified that there is an action piece to the audit as well, but that the report confirmed the DESE finding that there needed to be procedural improvements. Ms. Washington added that it is important to think about the way the entire process works, and if some things are improved at the forefront, it can change the mindset and approach that staff use to get to the final stage. Subcommittee Member Saeh asked for clarification about the part of the pathway where the system is breaking down. Ms. Washington noted that she ask Jonathan Libby from the Office of Student Services if this question is part of the action plan.

The auditors are preparing for Phase 2 of the audit.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Checkoway". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name "Amy Checkoway".