

Policy Committee Remote Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 11, 2021 @ 3:30 PM

Attendees: Denise Day, Dan Klein, Tom Newkirk, James Morse, Todd Allen, Sue Caswell, Wendy DiFruscio

Visitors: Tessa Lippman, Cristina Dolcino

Dr. Morse opened the meeting by introducing Tessa Lippman an ORHS senior who was an integral part of this committee and an articulate leader in our work on revising the Antiracism Policy ACA.

Tessa thanked Dr. Morse for having her be a part of this important work. She began by stating that the policy in front of everyone has three main areas that were looked at, expand measures and steps to include faculty and staff, strengthen the language condemning racism and demonstrate antiracism.

She began by stating what in the first paragraph was removed and that they added stronger language as well. She then stated that they added a quote by Ibram X. Kendi.

Additionally, a new # 1 was added to input language surrounding Implicit Bias.

Dr. Morse stated that along with the current committee input there was additional input from the middle school students, with parent permission, to this policy. Tessa also stated that at the end of the policy there was language added that this policy would be reviewed in the odd number years so that it could be placed on a continuous cycle.

Dan Klein thanked everyone involved in revising this policy and as this was a remote meeting, he sent his suggested changes Wendy.

Dan suggested that in the first paragraph the following be revised to state: The Oyster River Cooperative School District (ORCSD) policy on racism is both a denouncement of racism and a public commitment to continually support social justice and equity for all in the ORCSD community by becoming anti-racist.

Dr. Morse agrees that we hope to keep the energy level going on this policy and hopes that with the middle school student involvement this will be a possibility.

Tom Newkirk stated that this is an advancement on what we had before and congratulated Tessa on all of her input and participation with revising this policy.

Denise Day stated that there are two things that are not in the policy: How is expected faculty through this policy going to be addressed in practice, and curriculum at the high school/middle school statements developed by faculty are inconsistent of how faculty presents at beginning of a semester.

Denise Day asked Dan if he wanted to add the rewording that he has on a few paragraphs.

Dan stated that tolerance for any form of antiracism know that there is already resistance to this and don't want to leave this open ended.

Dr. Morse stated that there will always be people who will not agree and will make people uncomfortable. It is not okay, and we need to work actively against it.

Tessa stated that she liked the wording, continually work and becoming antiracist.

Tom Newkirk stated that the actions are focused on behavior and attitude, will there be any discussion regarding supporting public economic equity, mass incarceration?

Tessa asked if there was a limit to how political we want the policy to get.

Denise Day asked if a statement should be added about teaching or becoming aware of the role racism has played.

Dan Klein asked if there was a way of building this into the curriculum. Exploration data for racism on society – how it shapes.

Dan Klein suggested that the following language change be made in the third paragraph of the first page:

The ORCSD is committed to being anti-racist by counteracting expressions of racism that may occur on District property or at any District event.

He also suggested that on page 2 #6 the following replace the current language:

In teaching, emphasize how culture and race enhance and enrich life. Across the District community, promote awareness of the contributions all people and cultures make to global citizenship.

Denise Day suggested that this policy be brought back to the committee at their March meeting with the suggested changes before going to the Board as a first read.

Dan Klein suggested that Denise update the Board on the proposed changes to this policy during the committee updates.

Dr. Morse thanked Tessa and she left the meeting at 4:09PM

Dr. Morse invited Cristina Dolcino to the meeting to review the changes suggested on the Sustainability Policy – ECFA.

Cristina began by stating that she worked with Sue Caswell and Shelley Mitchell on this revision and that they took the existing policy and made additions and deletions as shown.

Denise Day questioned the bullet that had “Stakeholder” with a question mark on it. She questioned if this was a vendor.

Dan Klein suggested using a different word instead of stakeholder. Maybe external parties, non-district parties.

Dr. Morse clarified who was being referred to as a vendor and gave an example of when the fill was chosen for the field.

Sue Caswell asked about renting out one of our facilities.

Dan Klein stated that the facilities policy it states that third party users must follow the District policy.

Tom Newkirk asked that when you are hiring someone to do the work, how do you know their sustainability practices.

Denise Day asked Sue Caswell if she had any language suggestions for this bullet.

Sue Caswell stated to remove the word “only” from this bullet.

It was suggested that “Stakeholders” be replaced with “vendor”

Cristina Dolcino stated that in the sustainability realm stakeholders means everyone, but that is not true in the educational realm.

Dr. Morse stated to revise the fifth bullet to remove the word “only” and replace “stakeholders” with “vendor, organizations and individuals. The new bullet will read: Work with vendors, organizations and individuals who model, promote, and improve the District’s sustainable practices; and

Denise Day asked if there were any additional changes, hearing none this policy will go before the School Board as a first read.

Dan Klein asked Denise Day about a meeting that he had missed and that there was a policy discussion surrounding coaching and booster clubs.

Dr. Morse stated that the Hiring of Coaches policy was not discussed and was brought back at a later policy meeting and that at a future meeting we can bring in Andy Lathrop to discuss both of these topics.

Dan Klein then asked if there was a way that we could keep track of policies that get sent back for further review or legal interpretation, or policies that get priority due to a law change, or policies that get reviewed out of the normal review process. Is there a way that the full Board can interact with the policy committee?

Denise Day stated that she believes that we are already doing this by sending the policy agenda and back up to the full Board for review prior to the policy meeting, so that if a Board member has a concern about a certain policy they can reach out to Dr. Morse with their concerns.

Dan Klein additionally stated that over the years something comes up with a policy that is not urgent, can we develop something to keep track of the policies?

There was no additional discussion and the meeting ended at 4:35PM

There was no additional questions or comments. Meeting ended at 4:35 PM – Next meeting: March 12, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy L. DiFruscio