



Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School
Minutes of the Academy Culture & Community Committee

Draft

Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 25, 2022
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom Video Conference
Members present: Linda Denault, Louis Fazen, Jessica Miller, Zaina Rivett*
Members absent: Jennifer Melendez, Sarah Risotti*
In attendance: Rebekah Andino, Lisa DeTora, Jim Donahue, Melissa Hogan, Alex McConnon, Jasmin Rivas
Also present: None

Order of Business:

Public Access 1 on Docketed Items*

1. Approve the minutes of the February 28, 2020 meeting of the Community Engagement Committee and of the November 18, 2021 meeting of the Academy Culture & Community Committee.....Jessica Miller
2. DEIA Plan.....Jasmin Rivas
3. Special Education Plan.....Melissa Hogan
4. New/Other Business.....Jessica Miller

Public Access 2*

Adjournment

Documents and Exhibits:

- Draft minutes of the February 28, 2020 meeting of the Community Engagement Committee and of the November 18, 2021 meeting of the Academy Culture & Community Committee
- Old Sturbridge Academy Community Engagement 2021-2022 update

Ms. Miller called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

A Quorum was established and the minutes were presented.

Public Access 1 on Docketed Items

Ms. Miller asked if there were any comments from members of the public. There were none.

1. *Approve the minutes of the February 28, 2020 meeting of the Community Engagement Committee and of the November 18, 2021 meeting of the Academy Culture & Community Committee*

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2020 meeting of the Community Engagement Committee and of the November 18, 2021 meeting of the Academy Culture & Community Committee.

Motion: Dr. Fazen moved to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2020 meeting of the Community Engagement Committee and of the November 18, 2021 meeting of the Academy Culture & Community Committee.

Second: Ms. Rivett seconded the motion.

All in favor. (Dr. Denault abstained)

2. *DEIA Plan*

Ms. Rivas shared her screen and explained the goals and objectives of the DEIA plan in draft form. This draft document was also presented to the instructional leadership team at Old Sturbridge Academy (OSA). Ms. Rivas reviewed the four main goals, with two objectives each:

1. Goal: Development board, staff, student, family and community awareness and competence around DEIA
 - a. Objective #1: Assess organizational and community DEIA awareness and culture competency.
 - b. Objective #2: Establish an organizational DEIA training structure that will take us from cultural awareness to cultural sustainability.

Ms. Rivas gave updates on trainings that have been done with Angele Goss.

Dr. Fazen said he was at the initial DEIA Board training and asked if it could be done again because it was very rewarding. Ms. Rivas confirmed.

Ms. Rivas noted that the timelines in the draft document are suggestions and will work with Leadership on them. Ms. Rivas reviewed the next goals.

2. Goal: Establish DEIA resources that are accessible
 - a. Objective #1: Create digital and on site DEIA resource materials for classrooms and OSA/OSV staff
 - b. Objective #2: Develop DEIA distribution materials for families and sending communities.
3. Goal: Assist in enhancing OSA's board, staff, and student diversity in alignment with OSA's strategic plan

- a. Objective #1: Review OSA’s job postings, descriptions, hiring practices and staff handbook
- b. Objective #2: Develop Partnerships and collaborate with community groups, businesses, and organizations in target communities.

Ms. Rivas met with two professors from Clark University to establish connections for the future. She noted the importance of providing support for educators of color in the Worcester County and creating networks for them, which is outlined in the DEIA plan.

4. Goal: Identify ways to expand curriculum and instruction around DEIA
 - a. Objective #1: Review curriculums and identify gaps around DEIA
 - b. Objective #2: Identify opportunities to increase educator awareness and competency or identities and cultures presented in the school community.

Ms. Rivas said she met with Mr. O’Neil from OSA on cultural competency around math. Per Ms. Rivas, it is important to create partnerships with all the departments in the school.

Dr. Denault asked for an example of what curriculums would be reviewed. Ms. Rivas said for example the health curriculum has supplemental materials around gender identity, so she reviewed those materials and gave input to adjustment counselors who will utilize the materials. Ms. Rivas noted that this is for 5th grade through middle school for the health curriculum.

Ms. Rivas said there are materials that OSA is already using like videos around belonging and being inclusive. Ms. Rivas creates links for the staff with an outline utilizing the curriculum that already exists. EL has a lot of material and she is able to hone in around specifics to be used.

Dr. Denault asked about the assessment that DESE has done for Goal #1. Ms. Rivas said the DESE observation tool is shared with OSA so the school can prepare for the charter review process.

Ms. Hogan entered the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

Ms. Rivas provided examples of the cultural competency the observation tool evaluates such as a teacher having a word chart in different languages and books by authors of color. DESE provides information to help teachers identify more of these resources in the classrooms.

Dr. Denault asked where the decision making taking place for books in the school library. Ms. Rivas said Ed Web and DESE puts out different webinars/professional learning that may give participants a list of different authors that have been researched/approved through DESE. Ms. Rivas said these then go to the instructional leadership team to have input. Ms. Rivas also noted that families and students are encouraged to share their favorite books.

Ms. DeTora said one of the student leadership groups have a mobile library and want to fill it with picture books that represent diversity. Ms. Rivas will meet with this group and these students will present them to the younger grades.

Dr. Fazen referred to health education with student discussion and asked if parents will be involved. Ms. Rivas said Massachusetts is an opt-out state and families get a letter from their district that describes what lessons will be taught. Parents can also opt-out of just one lesson. If a parent does

choose to opt-out for whatever reason, their child would be given an alternative activity by their teacher.

Dr. Denault asked if OSA will be teaching critical race theory to the students. Ms. Rivas said no because K-12 schools do not teach Critical Race Theory. She said what is taught in history and humanities comes from the DESE Mass Frameworks, this is where parents should be referred to when they have questions.

Ms. Miller said the newsletter is an excellent way to communicate with parents in addition to the teachers communicating with them. Per Ms. Miller, the priority is to be transparent with the parents.

Ms. DeTora said the student learning target is “I belong in this crew” and emphasized the importance of promoting that. It sets table of what OSA is doing in terms of all voices. Ms. Rivas has collaborated with OSA while using the DESE checklist which showed growth in the area in cultural proficiency.

3. Special Education Plan

Dr. Hogan gave an update on increased staffing, a new special education teacher leader, the EL curriculum, and helping to assess programming to look towards the future on needs for tools and trainings. OSA increased the school adjustment counselor staffing since there was a need for social-emotional support for the students. Per Dr. Hogan, as the students come in, it is reassessed and recalculated with three year revelation cycles. Some students test out of special education and are no longer on an IEP. Dr. Hogan reported that the system and program is working and OSA is working closely with OSV staff on projects to promote access in OSV. OSA is also working on establishing special Olympic programming for OSA and programming/development on disability awareness.

Mr. Donahue left the meeting at 2:46 p.m.

Dr. Hogan noted the special education newsletter to promote awareness. OSA published technology, programs, and platforms for students to promote access. OSA will add more assessment tools so special education teachers have resources.

Ms. Miller asked how disability awareness is promoted at the Town meetings. Dr. Hogan said the students are involved with the planning of choosing a disability to share information on depending on what the month is.

4. New/Other Business

Ms. Miller asked about the Community Engagement 2021-2022 update that was sent to the committee. Ms. DeTora said it came from Administration to subcommittee to the Board. It summarizes the progress of OSA’s goals.

Dr. Denault asked about the swimming program at the Y for the students. Ms. DeTora said it is an opt-in program for grades 6 and 7 that has been combined with the afterschool program. There are 18 students who have signed up that will be transported to the Y to learn to swim.

Public Access 2

Ms. Miller asked if there were any comments from members of the public. There were none.

Motion: Dr. Denault moved to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Dr. Fazen seconded the motion.

All in favor.

Ms. Miller adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.