

Human Relations, Diversity & Equity Commission

Retreat 9/22/24

Whole Foods loft

Sherman Oaks, CA

10 am – 2:30 pm

PRESENT

Cruz, Brenda AALA  
Castillo, Carlos, Museum of Tolerance  
Crouch, Perry, Franklin (7)  
De La Rosa, Gary, at large  
Espinoza, Sayra, UTLA  
Jacobs, Bud, Superintendent  
Rivlin, Shelley, Schmerelson (3)  
Robledo, Olivia, Gonez (6)  
Watts, Joyce, selected

STAFF

Chiasson, Judy

ABSENT

Abelsson, Mark, Selected  
D'Alessandro, Valentina, LA County HRC  
Friedman, Matthew, ADL  
Kakassy, Allan. McKenna (1)  
Noise, Tyisha, LACOE  
Ortiz, Margaret, SEIU  
Paladin, Luboff, Melvoin (4)  
Valladares, Claudia, Goldberg (5)  
Williams, Jamaal, LACOE

VACANT

Rivas (2)

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 am with a citizen test

Discuss the bylaws

Unique aspect of the commission is that the we report directly to the board.

Keywords in the by-laws that need definition:

- Equity
- Engagement - parameters as commission and as individuals

The commission brings information, but does not make decisions.

What is expected of board-appointed commissioners?

What is expected of community commissioners?

Have identified the awards as significant - consider targeting the awards. This year s/b civics to align with the election

HRDE highlights a different award recipient each month on our internal message board (Schoology)

Watts pointed out that 0% of black graduates of LA HS were proficient in math in 2022 and 2023 (2024 results are not yet posted).

How does the commission learn from community efforts to achieve equity? How might community decide to act on commission findings in their efforts to bring about change?

Tackle membership issues

- LA City - ask Caprice Maddox
- LA County - Valentina
- LACOE - Jamaal, Kathryn, Nicole
- Parent rep - Matt, Sayra

HRDE staff will interface with staff on behalf of the Commissioners or facilitate Commissioners' access to district personnel.

Know the process for modifying bylaws and prioritizing change

School climate affects all aspects of education, and is measured in attendance, academics, and the School Experience Survey

Awards address this. District is promoting SEL

Crouch feels parents need to be more engaged

Staff influences both affected, and are affected by, by climate

What is the process to engage LAUSD? Rivlin's homeless task force languished because of lack of engagement from the district

Discussed the shortcomings of e-professional developments in isolation (e.g., SEL, child abuse, culturally responsive pedagogy). Idea is to do during the teacher PD simultaneously, interactive, skilled facilitation

Cruz - high school teachers prefer to do at home instead of in person meeting. PD time is absorbed by so many district issues.

Cruz - concept of the HR Commission - if we want to achieve equity and do what's right. Begin with board. Recognize availability of the different communities we serve, e.g., coffee with the principal at 8am or 6pm? Until we tackle issues facing the parents, we will not achieve equity.

The committees can meet between the Commission meetings. How do they gather then share info?

What is standing in teachers' way of helping students? How to address burn out?

What are our top priorities and how are these informed by engaging stakeholders? Data?

Page 8 of by-laws "other groups" can include non-Commissioners in an advisory capacity. Idea to include videos of students, parents to showcase authentic voice.

How do we decide the top priorities for subcommittees? - survey (no one stepped up). There are competing needs! We are able to augment with non-commissioners. What are board members' priorities v. community priorities? Neighborhood Councils can be a source of information.

Consider having the commission meetings in the local regions periodically. Location away from the school building can be more conducive to parent/community sense of ownership/empowerment.

1. What brought you to the Commission? - voluntold, bringing the black male voice
2. What has been your proudest moment on the Commission?
  - a. The awards
  - b. Honoring Joyce Germaine Watts for African American History month
  - c. Getting laundry facilities into Reseda and Taft HS
3. Saving HRDE
  - a. Community meetings
4. What does success look like?

The message of “The Commission” to hold weight. There are so many more people doing the work, but the problems persist

Success is setting priorities and we adapt to the evolving world and students, to keep improving. The system still needs low wage workers which is in direct opposition to equity, such as people in unskilled and low-skilled jobs, as well as “free” labor provided by the prisons. Schools alone cannot affect the full breadth of systemic injustice.

5. What are the elements of success?

- a. Community connections to assist students.
- b. *Really* believe in students. When you believe, working with students and their families is a gift. Intentionally plan for their success. Sometimes teachers stop believing due to lack of time and other barriers.
- c. Need to hone in on key elements. Give schools ONE thing to focus on.
- d. Always center the students. Barriers will be seen as challenges to overcome.
- e. Deeper analysis of systems change as needed for equity

*Definitions of educational equity:*

1. Providing the appropriate support for the needs of individual students or student groups. The support context may include being responsive to students with exceptional needs (e.g., gifted, cognitive and physical disabilities, linguistic and social-emotional) and student groups that have experienced historic economic and educational deprivation.”
2. Equity includes elements of fairness and justice. Adjustments that are made based on goals for equity (when racism and sexism have created inequities).
3. Everyone receives what they need to be successful.
4. Each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential.

Discussion on definition of equity:

Also influenced by parents. Some parents exercise strong opinions on what they want their children to do, which can be a barrier to higher aspirations, especially if parents were not supported in preparing for higher education. Tuition debt is a serious deterrent.

We should equip students who have the choice and skills for college or career. Prepare them to graduate able to pursue a full range of career options and not allow tracking that contradicts equity and perpetuates social and economic injustice.

Removing barriers, providing multiple opportunities, and supporting students in post-secondary pathways. Most students and families are not guided toward the dual enrollment option to enroll in community college tuition-free while in high school to begin 4-year college course of study tuition-free.

Note that due to institutional, community and family bias, not all students are given the same information to make informed choices... in addition to the consideration of maturation.

Select the top 3:

1. (5 votes) Equity issues include scheduling school meetings so working parents are able to truly collaborate (Sayra, Carlos, Blanca & Perry)
2. (5 votes) Ways to share and replicate best practices highlighted in the human relations awards. (Bud will address)
3. (4 votes) What is expected of board-appointed commissioners? Of at-large commissioners? (Shelley, Judy & Gary will discuss)
4. (4 votes) Use of evidence-based best practices for professional development (Olivia & Joyce)
5. (2 votes) What's the focus/attention on school climate?
6. (2 votes) What to do when there's a breakdown or the district is unresponsive?
7. (2 votes) Define "engagement" parameters as commission and as individuals
8. (1 vote) Ways to learn from community efforts to achieve equity
9. (1 vote) Tackle our membership issues e.g., parent, city, county, LACOE reps
10. (0 votes) Know the process for modifying bylaws and prioritizing changes

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm