

Berlin Board of Education Launches Committee on Equity and Social Justice

At the October 13, 2020 meeting of the Board of Education, the Board approved the formation of the Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee. The language below is meant to clarify the intent of the Committee and the work that the Board has charged the Committee with undertaking.

The Board is seeking members for the Advisory Committee. These individuals will serve as a steering committee, and will develop avenues for input from the broader Berlin school community. We expect that committee members will commit to participating in regular meetings (most likely once a month), will read materials as requested in preparation for participation, and will assist in community outreach to ensure that perspectives of many members of the community are heard. If you are interested, please complete the form at this link by November 30, 2020: <https://forms.gle/8a4ortdAwSm1QkFb6> The link will also be posted to the district website and sent out to the school community via School Messenger.

Charges for Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee:

The Berlin Board of Education recognizes the need to address and dismantle the institutional barriers and systemic racism that continue to impede equitable educational opportunities for each child in the district. The Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee is committed to evaluating and transforming our current practices at a systemic level to eliminate disproportionality in education and in all aspects of administration. These efforts require a long-term commitment from our advisors that includes both making recommendations and staying engaged as our work progresses over time.

Goals of the Advisory Committee:

- Represent diverse voices and perspectives across the education system and community on equity and race
- Address authentic concerns with the current system and recognize disproportionality in education and in all aspects of administration
- Collaborate with district leaders to develop an Educational and Racial Equity District Plan as well as making thoughtful and timely policy, procedures, and school support recommendations for change for the 2020-2021 school year
- Focus on learning about institutional, structural, and systemic racism and share findings with the Board
- Commit to long term engagement and periodic review of progress, including both making recommendations and staying engaged as our work progresses over time

Potential Areas of Focus for the Advisory Committee:

- Identification and reduction of student achievement gaps between students of different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds in the Berlin Public Schools
- Cultural competency throughout the school system, reflected in communications between students, staff and members of the community
- Identification and reduction of disproportionate school disciplinary actions against students of different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds

- Positive improvements in sustaining safe and supportive school cultures, measured through surveys of students and staff on whether they feel valued and supported in the system

The Advisory Committee will:

- Make recommendations to the Superintendent for changes to district policies and procedures related to equity practices and systems
- Monitor progress and outcomes of recommendations implemented
- Serve as a two-way conduit of information to diverse families and community members.
- Serve as family and community connectors to the public, communicating the committee's recommendations and progress