



DEI Committee

Regular Monthly Meeting Report - May 2024

DEI Mission: Sterling Montessori values diversity, prioritizes equity, and commits to being an inclusive school community which is critical to meeting our Montessori mission and affirming the full humanity of all community members. ([Our DEI Pledge](#))

Committee Actions and Recommendations:

- “Suicide is rising as a leading cause of death for children and adolescents. According to the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, the rate of youth suicide in North Carolina has nearly doubled over the previous decade.” [NCIOM](#) The board should consider the addition of questions that measure our student’s mental wellness as part of routine surveys.
- The board should consider that “most elementary and secondary schools in the United States provide inadequate mental health supports, despite the reality that the number of students in need of services continues to outpace available resources (Foster, Rollefson, Doksum, Noonan, & Robinson, 2005).” [School Mental Health Initiative](#)
- The board should review data and policy to ensure alignment with State Board of Education approved professional standards for school counselors. [N.C. G.S. 115C-316](#) states that "School counselors shall implement a comprehensive developmental school counseling program in their schools. Counselors shall spend at least eighty percent (80%) of their work time providing direct services to students."



Minutes from March 4th, Meeting:

Attendance and Call To Order

Virtual via Google Meet

Chair: Dwayne Jones

Board Members Present: Dwayne Jones

Others: Dana Riley, Dwane Jones, Jenny Lanzen, Mary Williams, Justin Tosco, Sydney Bullock, Juliette Burke, Maureen Capillo

Meeting was called to order at 4:03 pm

Updates from Executive Director

- The Peaceful Schools program has continued to work with directors on a monthly basis. Collaborative decision-making at the director's table has helped bring trust.
 - Danielle will step in as our main facilitator/lead trainer.
 - Danielle and Rachel will attend the director retreat in July.
- Prospective Initiatives
 - Buses; scholarship program (between 8-16 3-4 yo) which could bring us up to "matching Morisville (90% above, and 10% below the poverty line).
 - Structure of ABAR and DEI work will be shaped by our work with Peaceful Schools.

Proposed DEI Initiative

- A subcommittee or workgroup will establish a DEI Guide/ Handbook - that could be useful for the Sterling community. This guide will put many of the things on the website in a centralized location and has additional graphics and hyperlinks for further research.
- Also provides a guide to school events, DEI Cultural Calendar, a list of resources and maybe a book list

Group Activity Highlights

Student Mental Wellness



- Discussion on the prevalence of mental health concerns in the classroom
- How does anxiety and depression show up at Sterling? Explore ways to identify, prevent and intervene (when appropriate)

Mental Health Statistics & Resources

- Untreated mental health issues can lead to decreased academic performance (NIH-National Institute of Mental Health)
- In 2021, about 1 in 5 North Carolina adolescents seriously considered attempting suicide, and 1 in 10 made an attempt [NC School Behavioral Health Action Plan](#)
- 80% of children who need mental health services do not receive them, primarily due to barriers such as lack of access and stigma (Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology)
- [Hope4NC](#), [Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#), [Crisis Solutions North Carolina](#), [Get the SCOOP on Managing Stress](#), [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

Discussion Items

Discussion items:

- Follow up on establishing subcommittee/ working group
- Follow up on displaying disaggregated data on staff, board and administrative demographics

Meeting was adjourned at 5:01pm.