



**Minutes**  
**NASHOBA Regional School Committee**  
**Diversity, Equity, Acceptance, and Racial Justice Advisory**  
**Minutes**  
**December 8, 2021**  
**8:00 PM**

**Meeting Remote via Zoom Technology**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87140833497>

Meeting ID: 871 4083 3497

**Attendees:** Laurie Burnett, Gregory Denson, Kristin Hera, Lindsay Chaves, Rhyllis Christopher, Kelly Lawlor

**I. Call to Order**

- Laurie Burnett called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM

**II. Introductions & Review of Norms**

- Laurie shared a document for collecting and harvesting the thoughts of the committee as it works.

**III. Citizens Comments**

- None

**IV. Review and Approval of Today's Agenda**

- Agenda may be shortened to focus on administrative issues

**V. Approval of Minutes**

- **Motion:** Gregory Denson moved to approve the DEARJ meeting minutes of October 10, 2021 as corrected; seconded by Kristin Hera.

Roll Call:

Laurie Burnett	Yes
Lindsay Chaves	Yes
Rhyllis Christopher	Abstention
Gregory Denson	Yes
Kristin Hera	Yes

Voted and passed. (4-0-1)

- **Motion:** Gregory Denson moved to approve the DEARJ meeting minutes of November 2, 2021 as corrected; seconded by Kristin Hera.

Roll Call:

Laurie Burnett	Yes
Lindsay Chaves	Yes
Rhyllis Christopher	Yes

Gregory Denson      Yes  
Kristin Hera          Yes  
Voted and passed. (5-0-0)

- **Motion:** Kristin Hera moved to approve the DEARJ meeting minutes of November 10, 2021 as corrected; seconded by Gregory Denson.

Roll Call:

Laurie Burnett      Yes  
Lindsay Chaves      Yes  
Rhyllis Christopher   Yes  
Gregory Denson      Yes  
Kristin Hera          Yes

Voted and passed. (5-0-0)

- **Motion:** Kristin Hera moved to approve the DEARJ meeting minutes of November 16, 2021 as corrected; seconded by Lindsay Chaves.

Roll Call:

Laurie Burnett      Yes  
Lindsay Chaves      Yes  
Rhyllis Christopher   Yes  
Gregory Denson      Yes  
Kristin Hera          Yes

Voted and passed. (5-0-0)

## **VI. Unfinished Business:**

- Updates Letter to School Committee
  - The letter was read at the November 17, 2021 Nashoba Regional School Committee meeting by Sharon Poch as part of the Advisory Committee reports
  - Discussion and action on the letter may be on the agenda for the December 15, 2021 meeting
  - Might be helpful to provide examples of Essential Questions and examples of important definitions related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in order to ensure that all parties are talking about the same thing.
- Land Acknowledgement
  - There are some concerns that land acknowledgements can be performative when done without other actions.
  - Laurie and Kaitlyn Angulo, the full subcommittee tasked to look at this, have discussed this concern and spent time researching this balance and listening to indigenous voices on Land Acknowledgements and concluded DEARJ should discuss using them in certain spaces and at certain times as well as including in the wording a recognition that more needs to be done. Sample LA's of various lengths have been drafted for review.
  - Kelly Lawlor has seen these acknowledgements being done in other area towns and sees the value in them even if some people see them as performative
- Indigenous Peoples Day
  - Laurie communicated with Ann Marie Stoica, NRSD Human Resources Director, who has been on medical leave, regarding participation on the calendar committee.
  - Ann Marie stated that the calendar committee will be put together at the start of 2022.

- It is not clear who would be responsible for the decision to change the names of holidays listed on the calendar- eg if this is something that the Calendar Committee could do.
- The Nashoba Regional School District 2021-2022 School Year Calendar removed the names of all holidays, so that the calendar reads “No School - Holiday” on all of those days
- Kelly reports that there are other schools in the surrounding area with named holidays on their calendars, including Indigenous Peoples’ Day replacing Columbus Day.
- Examples of how other local communities have addressed recognition of days were discussed including Lexington, Shrewsbury, and Framingham.

## VII. New Business

- Structure of DEARJ Advisory
  - Discussion of roles within the advisory, Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary
- Vote on Positions/ Roles
  - **Motion:** Gregory Denson moved that Laurie Burnett be named the Chair of the DEARJ Advisory Committee; seconded by Kristin Hera.  
Roll Call:  
 Laurie Burnett        Yes  
 Lindsay Chaves        Yes  
 Rhyllis Christopher    Yes  
 Gregory Denson        Yes  
 Kristin Hera            Yes  
 Kelly Lawlor            Yes  
 Voted and passed. (6-0-0)
  - **Motion:** Kristin Hera moved that the DEARJ Advisory Committee rotate the role of secretary meeting to meeting; seconded by Gregory Denson.  
Roll Call:  
 Laurie Burnett        Yes  
 Lindsay Chaves        Yes  
 Rhyllis Christopher    Yes  
 Gregory Denson        Yes  
 Kristin Hera            Yes  
 Kelly Lawlor            Yes  
 Voted and passed. (6-0-0)
  - Discussion of the position of Vice-Chair being left unfilled ended without a vote.
- Outreach and community input and participation
  - Discussion about how DEARJ can get more input from other groups, including the following
    - (1) The Nashoba Area Social Justice Alliance (NASJA) President Abby Morgan is meeting with the Students for Social Justice at Nashoba Regional High School.
    - (2) How much has this been a part of the new superintendent’s listening sessions with the community and will more information be available?
    - (3) Will the district be doing a needs or equity assessment?
    - (4) Should “Courageous Conversations” be considered as a tool for community engagement?
- Discussion of next steps
  - Chair Burnett has an upcoming meeting with Superintendent Downing and discussion topics and questions were considered

- (1) What Professional Development is being offered now and in the future?
- (2) What is the superintendent's experience/background in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work and how are they part of his vision/plan?
- (3) Would it be appropriate to invite Superintendent Downing to meet with the DEARJ advisory committee and would he be open to doing so?
- (4) What steps need to happen for acknowledgements to be on the district calendar?
- (5) How can/will the Portrait of the Graduate and Back to the Future programs connect to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work in the district?

## **VIII. Announcements/ Updates from the community and district**

### **IX. Items for future agendas**

- Write a mission or vision statement for DEARJ
- Work on clear shared definitions with sources
- Specific action steps, based in part on the School Committee's response to the DEARJ letter read at the November 17, 2021 meeting

### **X. Adjourn**

- **Motion:** Gregory Denson made a motion to adjourn; second by Kelly Lawlor.

#### Roll Call:

Laurie Burnett        Yes

Lindsay Chaves      Yes

Gregory Denson      Yes

Kelly Lawlor         Yes

Voted and passed. (4-0-0)

"The items listed are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law."