

HRAC Meeting Minutes, Monday, February 1, 2021

The fourth meeting of the Human Resources Advisory Committee 2020-2021 (HRAC) met on Monday, February 1, 2021 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Minutes compiled by Beth Eachus.

In attendance were:

Karen Keys-Gamarra, School Board Member Liaison
Sean McDonald, Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources
Leonard Bumbaca, HRAC Chair, Community Representative from Mason District
Shareem Annan, Community Representative from Dranesville District
Patty Barbour, Community Representative from Springfield District
Anita Branch, Community Representative at-large
Mimi Dash, Community Representative from Providence District
Beth Eachus, Community Representative from Hunter Mill District
Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin, Community Representative from Braddock District
Joyce Harris, Community Representative at-large
Tiffany Pryce, Community Representative from Lee District
Emily VanDerHoff, Community Representative at-large
Sara West, Student Representative
Kimberly Adams, FEA President
Tina Williams, FCFT President
Rich Hronik, Multimedia Engineer, FCPS
John McLaren, Senior Member Relations Specialist, FCFT
Anthony Harris, Frost MS Principal and President of the Fairfax Alliance of Black School Educators
Rebecca Baenig, Asst Superintendent, Region 5
Dean Brooks, FCPS Human Resources
Nelda Brown, FCPS School Board Staff Aide
Mie Devers, Dogwood ES Principal
Carolyn Haydon, FCPS Human Resources
Ashley Hicks, FCPS Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist
Marty Smith, Chief Operating Officer of FCPS

School Board Members in attendance:

Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District
Karen Corbett-Sanders, Mount Vernon District
Karl Frisch, Providence District
Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Member at Large
Megan McLaughlin, Braddock District
Elaine Tholen, Dranesville District

The meeting proceeded as follows:

The meeting was called to order by 6:00 p.m. by HRAC Chairman Leonard Bumbaca

6:00pm-6:05pm Welcome and Meeting Agenda: The Meeting Agenda was presented. School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that other members of the School Board would be joining us. Chairman Bumbaca shared the February agenda and communicated that if we were not able to address all items on the agenda during the meeting then we would move those items to next month.

6:05pm-6:15pm Presentation of the HRAC 2020 Report: Chairman Bumbaca presented the HRAC 2020 Report and its Charge “Leadership performance that promotes a rewarding workplace environment: HRAC will make recommendations to improve practices used by FCPS leadership personnel at school and district levels to promote a rewarding workplace environment.” He also shared the four areas of focus:

- 1) Complaint and Grievance Outcomes
- 2) Intervention and Separation Procedures (amended to Response in Support of Staff Experiencing Separation and Isolation (COVID-19))
- 3) Employee Rights with an emphasis on the creation of an *Employee Bill of Rights*
- 4) 2018-2019 HRAC Report Progress

Chair Bumbaca also shared the following recommendations: 1) Keep an eye on the exercise of power between supervisors and staff, 2) Anticipate and prevent risks to staff members and FCPS community, 3) Get the word out about employee rights in a clear and concise form, Portrait of a Workplace - Employee Bill of Rights, 4) Follow up on previous HRAC work in a meaningful manner, 5) Provide appropriate emphasis on diversity and inclusivity, and 6) Maximize HRAC capacity.

6:15pm-6:40pm School Board Members Q & A: School Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra thanked Chair Bumbaca for his presentation of the report and opened for questions from the School Board members.

School Board Member Elaine Tholen of the Dranesville District shared that she enjoyed working with the HRAC last year and asked for plans for next steps. Chair Bumbaca said that the 2020-2021 HRAC voted to endorse the 2020 report and that we are focused on the Employee Bill of Rights as one of our two main areas of focus for this year. He did share that there was concern regarding legal implications of the Employee Bill of Rights and how it would fit into Collective Bargaining. Chair Bumbaca then shared that we do not see that Collective Bargaining would have any negative impact on moving ahead with the Employee Bill of Rights.

School Board Member Karen Corbett-Sanders of the Mount Vernon District asked if the Employee Bill of Rights from Wisconsin, Alabama, Delaware and Louisiana be sent to the School Board. She also asked if any other government organizations in Virginia had an Employee Bill of Rights. Chair Bumbaca shared that he would forward to the FCPS School Board the Employee Bill of Rights from the four states as well as the Bill of Rights from the IRS which had been used as a model for its format and simplicity.

School Board Member at Large Rachna Sizemore Heizer thanked the HRAC for the report and would like to see other school systems with Employee Bill of Rights. She also asked about how the HRAC viewed its implementation and how we would ensure accountability and enforcement. Chair Bumbaca said the first step was dissemination and communication. He share that the next step was providing resources for remedy or appeal. Chair Bumbaca then said that enforcement starts with the School Board and be made part of the FCPS Strategic Plan. Both Chair Bumbaca and School Board Member Rachna Sizemore Heizer discussed and agreed that an Ombudsman could be a critical part of ensuring accountability and enforcement.

School Board Member Laura Jane Cohen of the Springfield District thanked the HRAC for the report. She asked what are the impediments to implementation of the Employee Bill of Rights. Chair Bumbaca shared that narrowing the scope and identifying the key elements were critical in developing the Employee Bill of Rights. He shared that there are many FCPS processes in place that support the key areas of the Employee Bill of Rights but there are also gaps that will be more readily identified.

School Board Member Karl Frisch of the Providence District asked if these rights will be general enough to apply to all employees. Chair Bumbaca responded that the Employee Bill of Rights is meant for everybody.

School Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra thanked Chair Bumbaca and the HRAC for its efforts.

6:40pm-7:25pm HRAC Participation in HR Assistant Superintendent Search: Chair Bumbaca shared that the HRAC was invited to participate on the panel and that Tiffany Pryce had been chosen as our representative on the HR Assistant Superintendent Search Panel. Chair Bumbaca shared that there were no successful candidates in the first interview process and so our focus was now to provide input on the interview questions.

The Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald communicated that he would be taking detailed notes on what the HRAC shared as far as questions that the candidates should be asked and what should be explored with the candidates. He also asked for input regarding characteristics. He also shared that there are two rounds of interviews - first with leadership and then with the community panel and that there is an opportunity to ask approximately 20 questions over those two rounds of interviews. The Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald also shared that there were other members of the FCPS Human Resources team that were participating in the meeting as well.

Braddock Representative Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin shared that she believed that it was important to ask the candidates to what extent have they been involved in developing strategic plans that focus on acquiring, developing, employing and retaining top talent in their organizations, i.e. the full life cycle of an employee. She also shared that she felt it was important to understand to what extent has the candidate been involved in collaboration and engagement activities. She also said that it was important to understand the candidate's ability to develop actions in responses to employee engagement activities.

President of the Fairfax Alliance of Black School Educators (FABSE) and Frost MS Principal Anthony Harris shared that FABSE has 8 top priorities of which 3 speak to the hiring of a new HR Superintendent. He shared that those three goals were: 1) hiring black talent, 2) retaining black talent and 3) addressing the school or office climate. He also shared that FCPS has a lot to offer employees including opportunities for networking and affinity groups. He shared that FCPS needs to have listening sessions with our employees and specifically our black employees. He emphasized the importance of having a diverse work force.

FEA President Kimberly Adams communicated that the FEA has been focused on the evaluation system and thinks the new HR Director needs to look at this system including the consideration of peer reviews.

President of the Fairfax Alliance of Black School Educators and Frost MS Principal Anthony Harris stated that our "firsts" or our Trail Blazers need support and that we need to think about agency because employees want to go where they will be comfortable.

School Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra agreed that this support was critical.

Dranesville District Shareem Annan communicated that she believed the following characteristics were important in a candidate for HR Superintendent: transparency,

trustworthy, versatility, adaptability and solution-oriented. She also believed that it is important that they have experience in diversity and inclusion.

School Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra stated that an emphasis on a candidate that focuses on best practices is important.

School Board Member Elaine Tholen said that she agreed that the candidate must be solution-oriented vs reactionary.

School Board member Megan McLaughlin from Braddock District joined the meeting and shared that she was very excited about the work of the HRAC. She also stated that we need a HR Asst Superintendent that is highly skilled and reflects our FCPS commitment to a Caring Culture. She acknowledged that FCPS has work to do but is grateful to Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald for his efforts during such a critical time.

Providence Representative Mimi Dash stated that she agreed that new director of HR must focus on transparency and have a can-do attitude. She also shared that the new HR person must emphasize that we need to support new employees.

FCFT Senior Member Relations Specialist John McLaren believed that a focus on transparency and accessibility as well as an ability to listen to and work with a teacher organization were critical characteristics.

Springfield Representative Patty Barbour shared that it was important that the new HR Director promote goal accountability. She also shared that we need someone who has the ability to set and cascade goals throughout the organization while ensuring understanding and accountability from the top down.

FCFT President Tina Williams shared that she appreciated an emphasis in terms of behavior on being results-oriented, innovative, comfortable and competent in addressing the many challenges (equity, social justice) She also felt that integrity and transparency and an ability to work across departments.

Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus shared that a key word is collaborate. She shared that the new HR Superintendent must be able to collaborate with individuals across departments and across FCPS. She communicated that it was also important that we understand whether the candidate had experience and success in developing and implementing actions plans in response to the results of employee surveys. She also shared that it was critical that the candidate was able to collaborate with others including the leadership team in creating and implementing those action plans.

Representative Joyce Harris shared that she appreciated and agreed with what the other speakers had shared but would also want to know if the candidates had experience in overcoming resistance and experience in addressing inequities.

Braddock Representative Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin stated that it was very important that the candidates have a skill in data analytics and be a results-oriented leader.

President of the Fairfax Alliance of Black School Educators and Frost MS Principal Anthony Harris stated that HR should focus on making jobs easier, not harder. He said that things can be unnecessarily difficult and HR can play a part in making it easier.

Braddock Representative Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin said that Anthony brought up a good point - the idea of Customer Service. HR exists for the customers and FCPS customers are staff, teachers, parents, students.

School Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra said that after years of the same or similar reports, we need an HR Director with vision and an ability to collaborate. She said that it was very important that every employee realized that they were entering a caring culture when they begin employment at FCPS. She wanted a candidate that has a vision on how FCPS can achieve what it wants to be. She also said that she agreed with the focus that HR needs to be focused on customer service.

Springfield Representative Patty Barbour asked we need a candidate that is culturally competent and what is your evidence.

Representative at-large Emily VanDerHoff shared that it was challenging for information to get to the top and wanted to ensure that the candidate was able to gather information directly from the schools

The Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald thanked the HRAC for their input and said that if we had further feedback then we should email him. School Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra asked if the Chief Equity Officer was involved in the process and he confirmed that the Chief Equity Officer was very involved.

7:25pm-7:55pm Identify efforts and goals re Acquisition, Development, Employment, and Retention of School Based Minority Staff Members : Chair Bumbaca introduced the next item on the agenda to discuss efforts and goals as it relates to acquisition and retention of Minority Staff Members.

School Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra asked that how does the Board leverage the knowledge of this committee and advocate for the changes needed to address this issue. She wants the committee's ideas on how to change the trajectory.

President of the Fairfax Alliance of Black School Educators and Frost MS Principal Anthony Harris shared that we need to look to neighboring school systems and try to determine why FCPS has issues with attracting minority candidates. He also suggested that we identify what incentives were effective in recruiting and retention.

Chair Bumbaca asked Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald how do we know why our candidates do not choose FCPS. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that the candidates are surveyed.

Braddock Representative Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin thanked Sean for providing the Goal 3 report and that she believed that it was great with a lot of insights but there was still opportunity to solicit information why people are leaving.

Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that they have been focused on a collaborative approach to retain our employees and how we develop talent. He discussed the goal of developing teacher leaders and shared that the new Goal 3 report would be presented later this week.

Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus shared that one of her previous positions had been in HR and was focused on the growing and retention of employees in a professional services firm.

She said that she was responsible for the Eastern half of the US and that they found success in a focus on leadership development. She shared that they focused on the specific training that was responsive to the needs of subgroups including an emphasis on women and minorities. She also said that formalized mentoring processes provided a forum for discussions and sharing concerns and asking for help before the employees left. We created leadership focus groups and offered seminars that were focused on the needs of those specific employees which may be different than the needs of overall population.

School Board member Megan McLaughlin said that we cannot solve the how without knowing the why and data collection. She emphasized that it is about the facts and collecting the data and benchmarking is critical. She shared that it is important to understand the why in order to know the what to do to get the representation that we want to see in our workforce. She said that we need the data to have an informed conversation about the issues.

Providence Representative Mimi Dash said that the first contact is critical and that new hire orientation is so important. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that the new hires spend time with their mentors and small groups to prepare for their roles.

FCFT President Tina Williams shared that one thing in terms of attracting people of color was to be welcoming and have authentic space where there is opportunity to change and improve worksites.

Springfield Representative Patty Barbour shared that we need to use the right tools and the right people to attract employees. Chair Bumbaca agreed and shared that it was also important to have the support and “more than one” in any area.

President of the Fairfax Alliance of Black School Educators and Frost MS Principal Anthony Harris shared that we can use employees that have overcome challenging experiences.

School Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra asked if we are reviewing and evaluating how we determine which candidates are unqualified as we may be missing qualified candidates.

Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that he would like to give an overview for our recruitment methodology and processes at our next month. He shared that they are also focused on recruiting students to become our future FCPS employees. He also shared that we need to focus on changing the narrative.

7:55-8:00pm Minutes of previous meetings and Wrap-up: Chairman Bumbaca thanked Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus for compiling the meeting minutes and they will be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting.

Chairman Bumbaca asked for a motion to adjourn. Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus made a motion to adjourn and Community Representative at-large Anita Branch seconded the motion. The motion was unanimous.

The next meeting of the HRAC meeting will be held virtually on Monday, March 1st from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

