

HRAC Meeting Minutes, Monday, December 7, 2020

The third meeting of the Human Resources Advisory Committee 2020-2021 (HRAC) met on Monday, December 7, 2020 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
Tiffany Pryce, Community Representative from Lee District
Emily VanDerHoff, Community Representative at-large
Mimi Dash, Community Representative from Providence District
Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin, Community Representative from Braddock District
Anita Branch, Community Representative at-large
Joyce Harris, Community Representative at-large
Beth Eachus, Community Representative from Hunter Mill District
Shareem Annan, Community Representative from Dranesville District
Patty Barbour, Community Representative from Springfield District
Marcus Salinas
Sara West, Student Representative
Kimberly Adams, FEA President

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. Chairman Bumbaca shared that the November meetings minutes were not yet available but the recording of the meeting was available. Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus had started the minutes but needed to leave the November meeting early and was compiling minutes based on the recording for review. The November minutes will be shared with the committee upon completion. Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus agreed to do the minutes for the December meeting.

6:05pm-6:15pm Update on from the School Board: Chairman Bumbaca asked School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra to provide an update from the School Board. School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra shared that the School Board was focused on plans for Return to School. Advisory Committee reports are not currently scheduled but will be scheduled soon. Equity for Thomas Jefferson admissions is also an area of focus.

Providence Representative Mimi Dash thanked School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra for her report and asked how many advisory committees served the School Board. School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra did not know the exact number but it was confirmed by Chair Bumbaca that there were nine advisory committees. Representative Dash asked if there was any consideration that the HR Health Benefits Advisory Committee (previously SEBAC) return as it had existed in the past and she believed it is needed. School Board School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra shared that the Public Engagement committee was looking at restructuring the advisory committees and that might be the more appropriate group to be tasked with this consideration.

FEA President Kimberly Adams shared that the return of a Health Benefits Advisory Committee would be included as part of collective bargaining when we get to that point.

6:15pm-6:25pm Staff Response Procedures: Chair Bumbaca shared that, in his research, he had found the documented Staff Response to the 2018-2019 HRAC report and asked that Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald provide further insight. Chair Bumbaca shared that the the School Board and the Advisory Committees are only two pieces and that the staff role and input is critical. The Staff Response was shared with the HRAC committee prior to tonight's meeting. There is no date on the report but Chair Bumbaca shared that it would have been helpful to the work of last year's committee as it documented the response of HR as well as their plans regarding how to address some of the points identified by the HRAC.

Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that with every report provided by the advisory committees, there is an expectation that staff will respond to the issues included in the report and share a staff response, strategies and solutions identified as well as next steps intended to address unresolved issues.

Providence Representative Mimi Dash shared that the 2018-2019 report was very extensive as was this staff response. She did however point out that it did not address Principal roles and responsibilities nor the identification of metrics in order to determine if the actions and strategies identified were implemented. She stated that we do not have a good understanding of whether these actions were implemented.

Chair Bumbaca shared that we should have used this staff response to ask questions regarding accountability. There is no response to the 2019-2020 report as of yet but when that response is created then we will need specificity and accountability. He also noted that there were many common themes over the years.

Springfield Representative Patty Barbour asked where was this report presented. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald reported that after the advisory committees present to the School Board then staff has approximately 30 days to respond to the report and presentation. The staff response is then presented to the School Board and is posted publicly. It was noted that it should also be posted on the HRAC webpage.

Chair Bumbaca pointed out that some of our concerns regarding diversity have been addressed and that we should be cautious not to "reinvent the wheel". This 2018-2019 staff response will inform our work for 2020-2021.

6:25pm-6:40pm Employee Bill of Rights (EBOR) Review and Issues: Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that he had done some research and that the EBOR had not been shared with the FCPS legal office. Legal now has the document and will be conducting its review. Not much information is available to share tonight. An initial reaction from Legal is how does the EBOR interplay with the conditions set if collective bargaining was to be adopted. There is a concern that EBOR overlaps with collective bargaining regarding working conditions. The EBOR does parallel with working conditions discussed within the context of collective bargaining.

Chair Bumbaca asked FEA President Kimberly Adams if EBOR was part of their discussions. FEA President Kimberly Adams shared that there had been no collective bargaining sessions yet but felt that working conditions and EBOR should be part of those discussions. Dr Ricardy Andersen and School Board Member Karen Corbett Sanders are set to be the leads for any collective bargaining discussions.

Providence Representative Mimi Dash shared that some of the issues regarding working conditions go back 40 years and have not been addressed. She shared that collective bargaining and the adoption of EBOR could be on parallel paths and that HRAC should stand by the EBOR as is and respond to any legal response.

Representative Emily VanDerHoff asked about the monthly meetings between HR and the association presidents mentioned in the staff response. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that due to COVID those monthly meetings were not happening but rather he was communicating to the association presidents as needed and the association presidents had a weekly standing meeting with the FCPS superintendent.

School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra then shared that she had met with the leadership of FABSE and wanted to enquire whether they could advise the work of the HRAC. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that it was up to the committee. Chair Bumbaca noted that FEA and FCTC do participate as full participants and that he believed that FABSE could be included as well.

FEA President Kimberly Adams shared that there are a number of organizations that represent different interest groups within FCPS but only the largest participate in the grievance process and that is where the distinction is typically made and other organizations do not deal with HR.

School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra felt that HRAC could include these other groups as their voices are not always heard. She noted that these groups are not included in the collective bargaining.

Chair Bumbaca and Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus both felt that these other groups will add an important perspective to the HRAC and it was decided that they will be invited.

6:40pm-7:10pm Discussion and Work Session regarding HRAC 2021 Goals: Chairman Bumbaca shared a draft of the 2020-2021 HRAC Tasks including: 1) Recruitment, Hiring, Retention and Growth of School Based Minority Staff members and 2) Employee Bill of Rights - Portrait of a Workplace.

Chair Bumbaca shared that there was Fairfax County does much to grow employees but does not always do well in keeping them.

Providence Representative Mimi Dash shared that EBOR should be the first priority because until current employees feel valued, retention and recruitment will be challenges.

Braddock Representative Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin felt that this draft was good but wanted to advocate for the use of strategic framework life cycle of an employee Acquire (Hire and Recruitment), Develop, Employ (where EBOR comes in) and then Retain/Retire.

Dranesville Representative Shareem Annan asked if it was a goal to split tasks within the committee. Chair Bumbaca believed that we would work on these items as concurrent objectives as a committee as we cannot have a subcommittee structure due to open meeting requirements.

FEA President Kimberly Adams shared that she agreed with Representative Dash that Employee Bill of Rights should be first. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared the tasks listed are organized by department within HR while HR partners on growth and development and some other areas.

Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus shared that she agreed with Representative Lisa Griffin that a strategic framework was beneficial to ensure a cohesive approach to address issues that affect people, regardless of whether these processes are housed in HR or at a local level.

Providence Representative Mimi Dash expressed concern regarding development opportunities offered as it is not always what employees and staff want. They should have input on staff development.

Chair Bumbaca shared that the engagement surveys should ask as to what training or development opportunities are needed. We need to identify best practices and leverage across FCPS.

Representative Joyce Harris thanked everyone for their input but stated that the key element is that we are not increasing nor retaining our minority staff and diversity in our workforce.

Braddock Representative Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin stated that we need a stakeholder approach to engagement in order to retain employees including minorities. There is a discrepancy as to what teachers, administrators and parents want and need. All are stakeholders in the process and we cannot leave it to just teachers but must include other perspectives.

School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra shared that FCPS currently does not have an HR Director. These ideas and a strategic framework would be helpful to the Superintendent and to the Board in determining our next HR Director.

Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that as we are looking to appoint the next assistant superintendent that these ideas and points need to be woven into the selection and decision making process.

Chair Bumbaca mentioned how timely these discussions are and noted that we all agree with the tasks identified.

Braddock Representative Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin stated a strategic approach is the right approach and that HR needs to be data driven so we can determine if we are recruiting the best and retaining our best.

7:10pm-7:40pm Identification of Data Needs: Chairman Bumbaca shared that he had discussed what data was available with Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald. He asked the committee for feedback on specific data needs.

Providence Representative Mimi Dash asked what was done with the results of climate surveys.

Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that the employee engagement surveys were conducted by K12 Insight and they compiled the results and do the data analysis by division, school and office. HR works with the principals and program managers on how to interpret data and utilize it to inform planning and decision-making. The data is presented to staff and informs strategies for improvement. That data is also shared with regional leadership.

Chair Bumbaca asked what data is already collected that will help us understand the experience of minority staff members. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that to protect the staff, he was not certain if we could break down the data by race.

Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus asked if there was any demographic data that could be collected as part of the employment engagement survey. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that it had not been collected previously but could be explored.

Chair Bumbaca asked if the HRAC could review the employee engagement survey questions. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that he could provide the survey questions. He also shared that analysis could be provided. He did share that the word that staff used to best describe their work and the most frequent word was “overwhelmed”.

Representative Joyce Harris asked if HR has reached out to principals to understand employee concerns and needs. She also asked that we create a “plan B” if the engagement survey data is not actionable.

Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that school leaders receive data and identify themes and areas of specific concern. The school leaders then receive support as they develop actions.

Braddock Representative Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin shared the employee engagement survey results can provide benchmarking opportunities and FCPS can create a culture of collaboration and learn from those schools that are doing well. We need to balance transparency with individual privacy and being anonymous.

Providence Representative Mimi Dash shared that people hesitate to participate in surveys where their voice is not heard and if no action is taken. She shared that “overwhelmed” has been a constant theme for years in FCPS and worse with COVID.

Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald communicated that HR can provide coaching and data but school leaders need to develop action plans. At a central level, “we are aware of a theme of too much work and not enough time. We can look to streamline processes and work to reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed” through process improvement, training and development.

Representative Joyce Harris asked if there is a question “has there been improvement?” on the survey. Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald is not sure if it is a question but will verify.

Springfield Representative Patty Barbour noted that when no action is taken then it erodes the credibility and viability of the survey. She also agreed that benchmarking information was important.

Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald shared that survey asks whether their supervisor shared the results of the the survey with them and whether they noticed efforts to improve since the last administration of the survey. He shared that he would check whether benchmarking was done at the school level or against other school districts.

Representative Emily VanDerHoff shared that she analyzed the last report and that, according to the survey, workload is getting worse. Trends of survey results also confirm that workload has increased. She offered to share her analysis.

7:45pm-7:50pm Criteria for Assessing Progress and Timeline: Chair Bumbaca discussed timeline and planned to review at our next meeting EBOR and general counsel response as well as any data available.

Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus requested that we also bring ideas regarding the life cycle of an employee to our next meeting.

7:50pm-7:55pm Agenda Setting for Next Month and Wrap-up: Chairman Bumbaca discussed goals for January meeting and determining our agenda. He shared that information will be shared via email.

Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus summarized the following next steps: 1) School Board member Karen Keys-Gamarra will provide an update on when the HRAC 2020 report will be presented, 2) Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald will provide the Employee Engagement Survey, 3) Representative Emily VanDerHoff will share her data analysis, 4) Braddock Representative Elizabeth (Lisa) Griffin will bring information regarding the Life Cycle of an Employee, 5) Interim Assistant Superintendent of FCPS Human Resources Sean McDonald will provide an update on the legal review of the EBOR.

Chair Bumbaca thanked the committee and specifically thanked Hunter Mill Representative Beth Eachus for her help with moderating the meeting and the minutes.

The next meeting of the HRAC meeting will be held virtually on Monday, January 4th from 6:00pm-8:00pm.