

The following members of the Durham Racial Equity Commission met via Zoom on March 20, 2024, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Tiffany Foster

Nisha Williams

Del Ruff

Ernest Smith

Elena Snavelly

Sheila Mullen

Delvin Davis

Ramya Krishna

Kedrick Lowery

Atrayus Goode

David Williams

Guests

n/a

Staff

Dr. Brent Lewis, Durham County

Ms. Sharon Williams, City of Durham

Absences

Jadda Richardson

Meeting called to order and facilitated by Nisha Williams

1. Public Comment

- a. N/A

2. Approval/Edits of February Meeting Minutes

- a. Failed to list Krista Kenney that she was present at the meeting
- b. Del has an excused absence and NOT Delvin
- c. Atrayus Good motioned to move forward with the edits; Tiffany Foster seconded

- i. No discussion's
- ii. Motion in favor to carry
- d. Elena to choose a task force group she would like to join

3. Education Committee Presentation

- a. Ramya presented power point
 - i. Del, Sheila, Ramya and Atrayus are a part of the committee
- b. Worked to figure out what could be done within our roles
 - i. Wanted to figure out what could be done within their boundaries and roles
 - ii. Having an understanding, the committee is formed to make recommendations and provide data needed to keep the work going... not necessarily to all the work itself.
 - iii. Making it so that the baton can be passed
- c. Focus was to better prepare students of today for their career paths today and into tomorrow
 - i. My Future, NC portrait
 - 1. Shows what qualities a NC graduate should have post-graduation
 - a. Adaptably, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and personal responsibility
 - ii. Driving questions
 - 1. How do ensure students attending DPS are ready for postsecondary education and career development based on our past performance in DPS?
 - a. Should charter schools be included?
 - 2. How do we get more students residing in Durham prepared to start high-need and gainful careers in Durham?
 - 3. How do we hold ourselves accountable?
 - iii. Readiness for postsecondary education and career development
 - 1. 51,227 total students enrolled in K-12 district schools
 - 2. Charter (25%), District (60%), home (4%), Private (11%)
 - iv. Past Performance for postsecondary readiness within traditional schools at Durham County
 - 1. Eligible Enrolled NC Pre-K Program: 30% vs Statewide: 53%
 - a. State Goal: 75%
 - 2. 3-8 Graders earning college-and career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in reading: 28% vs Statewide: 30%
 - a. State Goal: 73%
 - 3. 3-8 Graders earning college-and career-ready scores (level 4 or 5) in math: 30% vs Statewide: 35%
 - a. State Goal: 86%
 - 4. 9th graders graduate with four years: 84% vs statewide: 87%
 - a. State Goal: 95%
 - 5. Students chronically absent from school: 41% vs Statewide: 32%
 - a. State Goal: 11%
 - 6. Student-to0school counselor ratio: 259:1 vs Peer Counties: 286:1

7. Dropout rate: 4% vs Statewide: 2%

v. Thoughts

1. Attendees have kids either preparing to go to Durham Public Schools or are currently in Durham public schools. Pre-K apps are not the easiest process
 - a. Elena Snavely has a 4 and 6 y.o. that were enrolled in Pre-K
 - b. David Williams, a former teacher, currently going through the process of applying for pre-k for two young children
2. It is disheartening to see only 30% of eligible 4 y.o. are enrolled in NC Pre-K
3. Nisha Williams -- Curious who are the kids in charter school?
 - a. Son came up through the Durham County public school system
 - b. Durham County's government needs to put more effort into this issue due to them divesting from the public school systems
 - c. A quarter of our youth are in charter schools
4. Delvin Davis
 - a. Is their racial demographic in regard to kids that are in public, charter, and private schools?
 - b. What do the numbers pre-pandemic look like?
 - i. We've been playing a lot of catch since the pandemic
5. The DPS would be a good collection of data
 - a. Currently do not have the information as of now
6. Del Ruff
 - i. There's no public data from the private schools. We do know 23% of students of color are enrolled but the data is not disaggregated. This data is not reported by the state but reported by each individual entity. We can only find a statewide association.
 - ii. Charter schools are public schools so data can be found at DPI
 - iii. 11% are in private schools --
 1. There was a bill to expand public school dollars towards private school tuition
 - a. We are losing about \$7,000+ in the future that will go to private schools instead
7. Brent Lewis
 - a. Reallocated monies impact local
 - b. When state monies go other places, it brings compression for local government, particularly for Durham County
8. David Williams
 - a. Pre-k program application is difficult
 - b. Sometimes placement does not make sense

vi. Racial Disparities

1. Black and Hispanic are the lowest math and reading scores form 3rd -8th grade 2021-2023
- vii. Thoughts
1. Nisha William
 - a. our school system is currently working to benefit one group over everyone else
 2. Elena
 - a. Do we have a sense of if some schools are better than others?
 - b. Ramya
 - i. These numbers did not look like this for high performing schools. For low performing schools, students in these categories perform better in high performing schools but score worst at a low performing school
 - ii. The diff. Was having passing rates between 60-70% vs having passing rates that are even lower than what is being presented
 3. Sheila
 - a. Theory in the past is at low performing schools are given less resources... The quality is different
 4. Elena
 - a. Durham county lines are not straight – it includes some neighborhoods and exclude others
- viii. Postsecondary Readiness Enrollment (during the fall immediately after HS graduation)
1. Durham county student loan debt: 21%; Student loans in default: 8%
 2. Persist to their second year: 83% vs 86% in peer counties
 3. Earn a degree or certificate within 6 years: 55% vs 62% in peer counties
 4. Collegegoers attended:
 - a. Durham TCC (4,755)
 - b. Wake TCC (1,108)
 - c. Duke University (325)
- ix. Thoughts
1. Nisha
 - a. Although we are a city of colleges and universities, our youth can't benefit from that
 2. Sheila
 - a. This is the city of medicine, we have RTP (the Silicon Valley on the east coast)
 - i. How many of our students are in the pipeline? This information supports the notion that there aren't many
- x. Recommendations
1. 3rd party evaluator to assess current services and to conduct:
 - a. Racial equity gap and root cause analysis
 - b. Comparative analyses with similar districts

- c. Readiness assessment of current curriculum content and delivery methods
- 2. Cross reference the Durham Neighborhood Compass and the Roadmap of need to identify disparities
 - a. 2023 Roadmap of need (public schools – which include charter schools)
 - i. Ranked two for positions per 100K but ranked 50 for a child fatality rank
 - ii. 100 counties in NC but not all have the amount of health care resources
 - iii. The highest demographics are the least well served
 - 1.
- 3. Adapt qualities from the Portrait of a NC Graduate provided by MyFutureNC into holistic evaluations of postsecondary readiness
 - a. Want to address the whole child
 - b. Goes beyond academics
 - c. Trauma doesn't necessarily make you stronger just creates more trauma
- 4. There's a "College advising corps"
 - a. Students from Duke and UNC are assigned to a school for a year
 - i. They are focusing on students that are doing well
 - ii. They are also not from the area or familiar with Durham public schools
- 5. Del
 - a. Ratio to students is 500:1
- 6. Sheila
 - a. Factors possibly impeding are having therapists and being aware of students' life situations
- xi. Preparing students for (anticipated) high need and gainful careers in Durham
 - 1. Ongoing questions & Where might it be houses
 - a. How many students graduating from Durham Public Schools are pursuing employment
 - i. Data may be housed at DPS
 - ii. May need to commission 3rd party evaluator
 - b. Are companies who are moving to Durham hiring Durham residents?
 - i. Data may be housed in the Office of Economic and Workforce Development
 - 2. If Durham residents are benefiting, why are we inviting companies to come... especially if there is no return for Durham
 - 3. Exploring potential for a need-based program hiring DPS students for education to career opportunities
 - a. Bulls' life science academy partnered with Biomark Manufacturer at Durham tech

- i. Mission is to promote Durham residents to become employed and live successful post-secondary lives
 - ii. Ages 18-25 can be a part of this
 - iii. Fully funded including tuition and guaranteed job interviews as a processing tech
 - iv. Makes a direct pathway from education into careers
- 4. Bolstering accountability through a Blue-Ribbon Task Force
 - a. Durham workforce development board
 - i. Seats for Black and Latino/a/x organizations engaging in education work
 - ii. Possible collaboration with the Racial Equity Commission
 - xii. Sheila Mullen is planning to meet with the Durham Chamber of Commerce to discuss the Durham Public Schools
 - xiii. Tiffany Foster is speaking at the ASCD Association (association for supervision and Curriculum Development) and will be speaking at the 2024 Innovation Symposium for family engagement next month [April]
 - 1. If there are any case studies from them, that looks like Durham's demographic, Tiffany will bring them back up at the next meeting.

5-minute break was held at 7:48 p.m.

4. Mental Health and Environmental Justice Subcommittee

- a. Subcommittee Members
 - i. Ramya, Atrayus, and Krista
- b. Driving Questions
 - i. What existing resources can we invest to promote healing centered racial equity in Durham, and where are the gaps?
 - 1. Dr. Sean Genwright talks about [shifting from trauma informed care to healing center engagement](#).
 - 2. Promoting healing centered racial equity – mental health
 - a. Trauma informed --> Healing- Centered
 - i. What happened? --> Appreciation of the Journey
 - ii. Focus on episodic harm --> Focus on holistic healing and relationships
 - iii. Clinical, individual approach --> Considers environmental context
 - iv. Focuses on treating clients --> Focusses on sustaining well-being
 - b. Healing through evidence-based mentoring (based in Durham)
 - i. Youth mentoring Collaborative
 - ii. Boost
 - iii. Graced
 - iv. Rosa
 - 1. In different schools around the country

2. Young people log into the platform and are asked “how are you doing today”
3. Assigned mentor is sent response immediately while also giving them wellness activities to lower their emotional temperature
- v. Thomas Mentor Leadership Academy
3. Co-Response
 - a. Additional trainings re: equity and inclusion/equitable well-being and bull city united/other community organization
 - i. Additional training for special populations via NAMI, HEART, and other community organizations who are already trained – potentially send trained people out with local officers
 - b. Increased co-response between DPD/DFD and HEART
4. Recommendations
 - a. Invest in community-based mental health interventions that build the capacity of lay professionals to provide youth with light-touch health services... and reducing barriers to mental health services
 - i. What is currently being offered and what are the gaps in service?
 - ii. How can we better promote training opportunities for lay professionals, youth, and families
 - iii. What structural barriers exist to accessing resources?
 - ii. Where are Black and Brown communities most under resourced in Durham and what nearby partnerships can best meet their basic needs?
 1. Most under-resourced Black and Brown Communities: Healthcare Clinics
 - a. Assessed median household incomes for Hispanic and Black household
 - b. Recommended Priority Neighborhoods – Unity Village, College View, Marbry Landing, Gatewood Forest and Stonehill Estates
 - c. There are some data holes, i.e. heart attach's withing the Hispanic
 - d. Most under resourced Black and Brown Communities
 - iii. How can we ensure that those who are most affected have a seat at the table?
 - c. Comment/Recommendations
 - i. Sheila Mullen – addressing the holistic need when correlating health disparities
 - ii. Insightful
 - iii. Prioritization is key
- 5. Any updates/announcements**
 - a. Elena Snavely – is there a committee that I would be able to help with?
 - i. Property reduction, housing, and criminal legal groups are available
 - ii. Nisha Williams to email the full list

- b. Next month will be meeting and have a presentation by David, Ernest, and Jadda
- c. Sheila Mullen will need an excused absence for the next meeting due to traveling for work

6. The meeting adjourned 8:28 p.m.