

Pearl River School District  
Equity Task Force Meeting Minutes  
October 12, 2022

6:00 PM

Dr. Pochintesta opened the meeting and gave a few remarks about the purpose of the taskforce and to introduce Dr. Lisa Brady, the facilitator.

Dr. Brady gave a quick overview of her background as an educator, including her time as Dobbs Ferry School District Superintendent, where she did similar work with diversity, equity and inclusion.

Dr. Brady asked participants to introduce themselves to the other members of the taskforce.

Following introductions, Dr. Brady stated that as a task force, we will be learning together. She acknowledged that all members come from different backgrounds and will have different perspectives. With this in mind, she asked that all members re-introduce themselves (to a partner) in a culturally responsive way.

Dr. Brady models the re-introduction by sharing information about her family, race/ethnicity, religious affiliation of her schools and family business. Participants turned to others sitting nearby to re-introduce themselves using culture/background as frame for the introduction.

Dr. Brady asked participants to share (with the taskforce) something new that they learned about their partner following the culturally responsive introductions. Several volunteers shared comments.

Dr. Brady stated that a welcoming and affirming environment is essential for creating an inclusive environment. She asked, what about this activity helped create a welcoming environment? Participants gave several examples.

Dr. Brady added that this type of introduction creates an environment where people are better seen and heard. She stated that people often have more in common than they knew beforehand.

Dr. Brady introduced the goals for the day, including the setting of norms and having a discussion about the book.

Dr. Brady began a discussion about establishing norms (presentation on screen and Smart TVs)

- Establish norms: Stay engaged, experience discomfort, speak your truth, expect and accept non-closure (it's challenging; uncomfortable)
- This is a starting point for Pearl River
- The goal is not to solve the problems of the world but rather to take small steps and make progress.

- She gave listening tips for participants if they don't agree with the comment of another
  - Write down what you don't agree with and continue listening
  - After the commenter finishes, ask yourself - Do I agree? Do I want to ask a clarifying question?
  - Pause, paraphrase (repeat back what I think you said), probe further

Dr. Brady introduced the text discussion on the book The Person You Mean To Be: How Good People Fight Bias by Dolly Chugh-

- She introduced the "Final Word Protocol"
  - 5 minutes - find a piece of what you read that was remarkable for you (good or bad). Ideas in the book that were interesting, thought provoking, significant.
  - Participants counted off 1-5
  - One facilitator per group
  - Participants read from the text
    - Three minutes to explain what resonated with you
    - Others members have one minute to respond to the reader
    - Return to reader to react to what they said
- Dr. Brady brought the room together and asked each group to share one or two thoughts from each group (several themes were discussed including shame vs. guilt, the Bootstraps analogy, mindsets, headwinds vs tradewinds, color blindness, implicit bias, and more).
- Closing activity - use the last 10 minutes "what is on your heart and mind right now with what's happening around diversity, equity and inclusion work in schools?

In closing, Dr. Brady asked participants to begin to think about the following:

- Which subcommittee to join:
  - Student Support
  - Curriculum materials
  - Professional development and staff support
  - Community education
  - Athletics and extracurricular activities
- Based upon the book the committee is reading, *The Person You Mean To Be: How Good People Fight Bias* by Dolly Chugh:
  - How is being a *builder* different from being solely a *believer*? Why is it important to be both?
  - What is the difference between *generating heat* and *generating light*? Are you more likely to use heat or light in a challenging situation?

Dr. Brady closed the meeting at 8:01 PM

Next meetings - October 26 and November 9, 2022 at 6:00 PM