

ALEXANDRIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2019
7:00 p.m., City Hall
301 King Street, Room 2000
The Chet and Sabra Avery Room

Members Present

Francisco Duran, Vice Chair
Matt Harris, Chair
Damien Hammond, Sr.
Monika Jones
Susan Kellom
David Rigsby
Scott Schwartz
Jenny Wade

Staff Present

Jean Kelleher, Director
Miladis Martinez Gutierrez

Excused Members

Danielle Beach
Amy Blackwood, Vice Chair
Christopher Harris
Michael Kreps

Guests:

Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Superintendent, ACPS

1. Call to Order/Introductions by Chair, Matt Harris

Chair Harris called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of Minutes of December

Upon a motion by Vice Chair Duran, seconded by Commissioner Wade, the Commission approved the minutes of the December meeting as amended. All Commissioners present voted aye, and two abstained.

3. Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Superintendent, ACPS

Chair Harris welcomed Dr. Gregory Hutchings and thanked him for being here tonight. John Porter introduced Dr. Hutching by saying that he was his former student and now Dr. Hutchings has become his supervisor. John Porter stated that Dr. Hutching graduated from T.C. Williams High School in 1995; went to Old Dominion University and received his Master's degree from George Mason University, and finished his Doctorate at the College of William and Mary. Dr. Hutchings was a Superintendent of Shaker Heights Schools, located in Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Hutchings thanked the Commission for inviting him to come to speak.

Dr. Hutchings started the presentation by talking about the Superintendent's 100-day entry plan. He stated that when he officially got the job in December 2017, he knew initially that he would have to begin drafting his 100-day plan. He said that he shared it with the Board of Education, the Senior Leadership Team, Principals and some Community leaders. He stated that he has been able to accomplish all of his action steps in his 100-day entry plan. He has also established a transition team, which consisted of Community leaders, Administrators, Teachers, Parents, and City Council members. The transition team serves as a senior advisor to the Superintendent during this process.

Dr. Hutchings stated that in his first 100 days, he began a listen and learn tour, and the goal was that he reached out to the community to hear the community's prospective. He said that he asked three questions: What is working well in ACPS? What are your hopes for ACPS? and What advice do you have for the new superintendent? On January 30 he will be speaking on what he has learn throughout the first 100 days and also what he believes their next step needs to be. He also stated that he will be discussing equity on January 30 and said that there are significant inequities throughout ACPS. He said that there needs to be a standard of teaching throughout the school division that they currently do not have. He stated that they need to have a frame-work that they work from and a standard of excellence that they have, regardless of what school they are, regardless of what level courses, and regardless of what children they are working with.

Dr. Hutchings said that they are using a book that is titled: Building Equity, and they will be using it for the next several years. He said that out of the Building Equity book, there is chapter on taxonomic called, Building Equity Taxonomic, also known as (BET). This is the frame-work that he wants ACPS to use as they began to tackle the inequities in ACPS, so that they just have a way to guide their thinking; to help them identify what the iniquities are in a very logical way. Some people may not make it through this process and this may not be what they want to do. He added that they need to have an expectation that they are going to tackle inequities within the Alexandria City Public Schools.

Dr. Hutchings stated that some of the important things that they have done is that ACPS has opened *two* new schools in the first week of school: Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School, and The Early Childhood Center, at John Adams Elementary School. He added that early childhood is one of the most important aspect of a child's education and career. High School Project is another major initiative that they are tackling right now, and they are grappling with the future of the high school and how to address the high school capacity. The recommendation that the team made to the Board was that they believe it is important for them to have a connected high school network.

Dr. Hutchings stated that with this connected high school network model that they are presenting, they are very familiar with that already, because they have the Ninth Grade Center, which is down the street from T.C. Williams main campus; they have a satellite campus of kids who are at the administration building; they have a chance for change, which is their alternative pathway program, which is located in old town. He said that they are embarking on the Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus and their partnership with them on some type of computer science focus. He also added that they are signing their letter of intent with Northern Virginia Community College to begin an early college program, which will be on the NOVA campus, and students will take all of their courses at Northern Virginia Community College from 9-12 grade; and not only obtain a T.C. Williams diploma, but also an associate degree.

He explained that some of the challenges that they are experiencing was the combination of the warm, wet weather, which had an impact in several of their buildings. He said that they are trying to work on a preventative maintenance plan, instead of waiting for things to break and

then to be fixed, being more proactive and having a complete plan throughout the process, this is a challenge for them right now.

Dr. Hutchings said that he wants to be able to collaborate with Human Rights Commission, there are several other organizations and groups that ACPS needs to collaborate with. He stated that he meets with City Manager Mark Jinks every other week, it is not just around budget season, it is every other week, and this gives him an opportunity to share some of the challenges that they face and share how they are spending tax payer dollars within the schools.

Dr. Hutchings stated that Safety and Security is at the top of every school division's list and is part of education, which is very unfortunate for us, but it is our reality now. He said that they have to make sure that they are responding to some of the violence that is happening within the schools and being prepared. He added that ensuring high-performing schools attract businesses to the area, so the school's success is the City's success. He also talked about Measures that Matter, which is a publication that was sent out in September 2018, and the goal was to make sure the community realizes that we are more than just a test score.

Chair Harris asked if there are efforts to do a better marketing for the school system. Dr. Hutchings stated that unfortunately some people have a negative image of ACPS, and we must change that narrative, and we have to find ways to get people into our schools. The goal is to have this marketing campaign, so we change that narrative. Vice Chair Duran asked what the school thinks about the equity policy that the City is working on and would like to hear about their thoughts and how they might partner with the City, like Fairfax did a joint equity policy with the County school system. Director Kelleher said that she has been chairing the City workgroup on equity. She said that they presented the work of the workgroup to the City Manager and then to City Council at the end of November. She added that they just joined membership with The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). She said that this month they are embarking on the implementation, and they are starting with the Police Department, the Department of Community and Human Services, Human Rights Office and Court Services Unit. She said they anticipate using some of the GARE tools. Director Kelleher said that they have expressed their hope that the City Government can link with ACPS moving forward and then have an initiative that is embraced by the elected officials and have a resolution or a policy statement.

Dr. Hutchings stated that this is the first time he has heard about the City's equity work and said that this is perfect timing for them to start this discussion now. He said that next ACPS 2025 plan is going to be all through the lenses of equity. Dr. Hutchings said that, if the City Collaborate with them, then they can work on the school's side with the educational focus piece; and then they can collaborate with the City. Commissioner Kellom asked when we expect to feel differences in students, a new school in the Potomac Yard area with Amazon coming into the area. Dr. Hutchings stated that what they are working toward is doing an analysis to get an idea of what impact Amazon is going to have on Alexandria City as a whole, as well as

Alexandria City Public Schools. He said that the City has already allocated some land for the schools, but it is not big enough for a big school, so they must talk through what is actually needed, as space is concern. Dr. Hutchings stated that they have to look at what impact Amazon is going to bring in regard to the student population. Dr. Hutchings stated that Arlington had release something a couple of month ago about Arlington schools, and he asked the superintendent in Arlington about how they came up with those numbers. Arlington did something by looking at the amount of available spaces of occupancy in housing that they have available; if the number of housing will be increasing between now and ten years from now. He said that Alexandria City Public School has to do something very similar to Arlington.

Commissioner Wade asked if students are having to pay a tuition fee with the partnership with Northern Virginia Community College. Dr. Hutchings said that students do not have to pay, it is open to everyone. He added that they are going to start what they called a summer bridge programs starting in 6th grade this summer, so that they are identifying under represented students early on. The goal is that their early college will be reflected of our demographics of our student population for ACPS. He added that they already have dual enrollment, dual enrollment is that they pay for students to take college course now, without being in the early college program. He also stated that they have the George Washington Health Science Academy, which is a government academy; students received up to 18 college credit hours through that program, and it is an automatic admission into the George Washington University.

Dr. Hutchings stated that a lot of private high school students are transferring to public schools, mainly because of the 400 courses that are offered at T. C. Williams. Commissioner Hammond asked, other than socio economic and language barriers, why is segregation happening in different classes, and what is being done to combat those issues. Dr. Hutching stated that what needs to be done is to provide cultural competence training for every ACPS employee and set a standard with regard to what equity means for ACPS. Right now, each person has a different definition for equity, because we don't have Alexandria City Public School's definition of what that means for all of our kids and employees of ACPS. He added that they need to have set an expectation and have a standard, and an accountability system. He stated that they need to have a list of what a classroom should look like for a proficient teacher; we need to have a bare minimum of what is expected from teachers.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if there is a teacher's union in the Alexandria City Public Schools. Dr. Hutchings stated that they have an Education Association. Commissioner Schwartz asked Dr. Hutchings if he is working with that Education Association to implement any of these as well. Dr. Hutchings stated that he meets with the Education Association once a month and they have worked on this for the past six months going from having a contentious relationship, to having a more collaborative relationship. This is going to be a complete collaborative effort; we have to make sure there is a two-way communication. Commissioner Schwartz asked how is he going to implement the marketing program that he has talked about tonight to parents who may not speak English. Dr. Hutchings stated that they have a full

department of translation services in ACPS, and through their family community engagement department they also have parent liaisons who go out into the community to share the information with populations who may not speak the English language.

Vice Chair Duran said that he is hoping that the LGBTQ students are part of the equity plan; and he also asked Dr. Hutchings to talk about what they are doing for undocumented students and what he envisions for doing more outreach to that community. Dr. Hutchings stated that the LGBTQ community is also a part of their equity plan, it is one of their other aspect of their work. He said that they are having discussions around gender neutral bathrooms, because they have some transgender students at the High School, those are things that they are going to have to tackle, they already have them in policy, but practice is another thing. Dr. Hutchings stated that they are not required to asked for any documentation for students, and they have been extremely successful with getting parents to complete the free and reduce lunch form. John Porter stated that a small group of citizens and he have formed a group to help fund scholarship support to undocumented students at T.C. Williams High School.

Chair Harris asked Dr. Hutching sif he worries about the price and lack of affordable housing eating into the diversity of the student body. Dr. Hutchings stated that it could have a negative impact on the school system, specially if the prices continue to rise. He stated that it is a concern for them, this is going to be a City issue that they need to tackle. Chair Harris thanked Dr. Hutchings for his presentation.

4. Executive Committee Report

Chair Harris stated that the Executive Committee did not meet this month. He said that for the February meeting they have invited Qasim Rashid, an expert on the field of Islamic-American relations and Mo Seifeldein, City Council member, had agreed to come. The February meeting will be held at the West End to reach out to the Muslim community to hear what their issues are and if there are any issues.

Director Kelleher stated that the I.I. Reports from the Police, she is hoping that they will come to February Executive Committee Meeting, and this is where they can follow-up with the Chief of Police about the issue that came up before with the Police-involved shooting.

Chair Harris stated that the Executive Committee was discussing inviting newly-elected City Council Members to the March meeting. Chair Harris also stated that they need to schedule the tour of Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center. Vice Chair Duran suggested scheduling it on a meeting day in April or May.

5. Director's Report

Director Kelleher handed out a list of formal cases that were filed from October-December 2018. She also provided a list of cases that were closed between October-December. Director Kelleher gave a brief report on the outcome of the cases that were closed.

Director Kelleher stated that the City became a member of The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). Director Kelleher stated that this the short session for the legislative session and all the bills are moving through.

6. Old or New Business

Chair Harris stated that John Chapman has been working to try to get the two people who were lynched in Alexandria a place on the memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. Director Kelleher stated that Patricia Washington from Visit Alexandria and Audrey Davis of the Office of Historic Alexandria mentioned the Equal Justice Initiative to her and said that there is going to be some movement on that issue, and also a focus on the History in Alexandria as well.

7. Liaison Reports

Commissioner Hammond, Sr. stated that the HIV/AIDS Commission didn't meet.

8. Announcements /Adjournment

Chair Harris announce that the ACT IMPACT Forum is going to be on January 30 on Equity. Director Kelleher stated that the Office of Human Rights was contacted by the Prince William County office and Curtis Porter asking for the Commissioners' email addresses, because he wanted to reach out to Commissioners.

MOTION: adjourn the meeting.

Hammond, Sr./Schwartz **PASSED** unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.