



Commissioner Walter Kendricks, Chair
Representing Eastern Washington

Commissioner Joseph Todd, Vice Chair
Representing South King County

Commissioner Andrea Caupain
Representing King County

Commissioner Michael Bailey
Representing King County

Commissioner LeRoy Laney III
Representing King County

Commissioner Dorian Waller
Representing Pierce County

Commissioner Zellynda Perkins
Representing Pierce County

Commissioner Dr. Yolanda Geolingo
Representing Thurston County

Commissioner Sheila Stanton
Representing King County

Executive Director Edward O. Prince

Commission on African American Affairs Public Meeting Minutes Friday, May 19, 2023 | 1:00 pm - 4:00 p.m. | Three Creeks Community Library, Vancouver, WA

Members present: Vice-chair Todd, Bailey, Perkins, Laney, Geolingo, Stanton, Executive Director Edward Prince, Program Manager Charlotte Kerney, Executive Assistant Keahna Umpstead. Quorum established

Absent: Chair Kendricks, Caupain-Sanderson

1:00pm – Meeting called to order by Vice Chair Todd

1:02pm – Roll Call

1:05 pm – Motion to approve previous meeting minutes by Vice Chair Todd
Point of order by Commissioner Laney - Motion seconded to correct and accept minutes by Commissioner Dr. Geolingo.

Vice Chair Todd called for vote - no objections. Motion carried. March 2023 commission meeting minutes approved

1:10pm – Executive Director, Ed Prince – Directors Report

Legislative update

- Session officially ended
- The Commission tracked 93 bills this session with 39 of those bills passing

1:15pm – Steven Morrison, Executive Director of Clark County DRC and Sarah Augustine, Strategic Relationships Director – Presenting on Resolution Washington Program Overview

Resolution Washington was established over 30 years ago under The Washington State Improvement Act of 1984 (RCW 7.75) with a mission to build and maintain statewide relationships, provide mutual support assistance, optimizer use of resources to provide and promote community mediation, and advocate for the welfare of community mediation. Allowing all residents in Washington to have an alternative to dispute resolution outside of the court system because not everyone feels that this system serves them. There are currently 21 Department Resolution Centers (DRCs) in 25 counties throughout Washington. These centers work as alternative dispute resolution centers by providing forums where

individuals can voluntarily participate in resolution disputes in a less adversarial atmosphere.

- Programs include preventative, pre-filing, in-court, post-filing, re-entry, and restoration services to provide wholistic service to individuals within each community the DRCs serve. These services can occur during any point of time during the conflict.
 - Conflicts related to divorce
 - Parenting plans
 - Workplace issues
 - Consumer issues
 - Small claims court
 - Foreclosures
 - Parent/child conflicts
 - Neighbor disputes
 - Landlord/tenant problems
 - Victim/offender conflicts
 - Elder-care issues
- Provide services to all Washington residents regardless of their ability to pay
 - 7 in 10 low-income households in WA face at least one significant civil legal problem per year with the average number of problems per household reaching 9.3 yearly.
 - Resolution Washington and their DRCs use a restorative and trauma-informed approach when providing services to their communities with a self-determination approach to allow for individuals to identify solutions that best work for them. An acknowledgement that the people being served may have limited confidence in the State's civil justice system.
- Partner with The Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) and The Office for Access to Justice board (ATJ) to offer collaboration, perspective, and partnership.
- Community Impact in 2022:
 - 166,255 total people assisted with direct services, including those served in the ERPP program.
 - 20,577 Mediation and Dispute Resolution cases
 - 2,498 District, Superior, Tribal and Juvenile Court referred cases mediated
 - 54,945 Youth served
 - 7,675 Community Members Trained in mediation services
- Partner with The Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) and The Office for Access to Justice board (ATJ) to offer collaboration, perspective, and partnership.

Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP) – established by the WA State Legislature as a mandatory 2-year pilot program that would operate statewide. The pilot program launches on July 1, 2021 and will end on June 30, 2023. This program brings together the landlord and tenant together with an impartial mediator to help the two parties resolve conflicts regarding rent owed before an eviction case is filed in court.

- ERPP services are available to all regardless of immigration or income status.
- Between July 2021 – December 2022, 123,188 tenants and landlords have been directly served with ERPP.

- Landlords reported receiving rent and keeping tenants in their rental spaces and were able to maintain properties in the rental market. While tenants reported being able to stay in their homes or create supportive move out plans that helps avoid barriers to future housing. Superior courts through the state reported a reduction in court dockets and were able to then allocate more resources to higher-need priorities.
- ERPP 2022 Impact
 - 110,142 People Served
 - 75% of ERPP mediations were settled
 - 94% of tenants continued tenancy where the outcomes are known
- ERPP ends on June 30, 2023
 - Anticipate having 3,500 actionable unpaid rent cases a month after this program ends.
 - Resolution WA has recently submitted a request for federal congressionally directed spending and keeping an eye on [SB 5197](#).
 - Locally many judicial officers do prefer o keep a pre-filing system available, and some are even exploring if there is a local process that may work best in their jurisdiction when ERPP ends.

Restorative Practices – Providing Wrap around services to those most vulnerable to negative influences or behaviors. Some programmatic examples by county:

- Wenatchee: Community training to connect across differences
- Grays Harbor: Multicultural sessions to build healthy relationships
- Cowlitz: Developing a pre-charge restorative program; working with rural schools
- King: School-based peer mediation to reduce suspension rates
- Kitsap: Multi-party community restorative processes; collaboration with jails and Women’s Correctional Centers
- Thurston: Innovative partnership with Drug and Mental Health Courts
- Whatcom: Re-imagining justice for survivors of DV and SA

Discussion- Commissioners and Resolution Washington discuss how we can better partner together to make sure the services provided at the DRCs is public knowledge to our communities and to continue to grow equity within these programs. By creating a learning cohort, coordinating with equity efforts, and helping the DRCs of Resolution Washington to continue to be responsive to local needs, and statewide training.

2:20pm – Janell Ephraim, Executive Director of Schools, Learning and Equity – Presenting on the development and implementation of Vancouver Public Schools Equity Policy

Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) is home to 21,000 students, more than 3,000 total staff, 36 school locations that will increase to 38 in the 2023-2024 school year, and 24 family community resource centers (FCRCs) plus 2 mobile FDRCs.

- VPS Student Demographics of 21,000 total students
 - 46% students of color
 - 54% white
 - 28% Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)

- 9% Two or more Races
- 3% Black/African American
- 3% Asian
- 2.5% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- .5% American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 25% from homes where English is not the primary language spoken at home
- 98 total languages spoken
- 14% English language learners
- 53% eligible for subsidized meals
- 15% receive special education services
- 850 homeless children and youth
- 180 are unaccompanied youth

Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) Equity Policy Implementation and Development –

Historically VPS had focused its equity work on poverty and supporting families with basic needs. However, in 2020 the previous VPS Superintendent committed to work towards equity more broadly after an investigation of the District by the Attorney General’s office that uncovered disproportionate levels of discipline for students of color and students that qualify for special services. Along with uncovering a large achievement gap between students of differing races in English language arts and math on the smarter balanced assessment.

- 2018-2019 Student Exclusion Rates (suspension or expulsion from school)
 - 6% White students
 - 8% American Indian/Alaskan Native Students
 - 8% Hispanic/Latino Students of any race(s)
 - 10% Students with Two or more races
 - 12% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander Students
 - 14% Special Education Students (SPED)
 - 15% Black/African American Students
- Percentage of students proficient in English Language Arts and Math by Race on the smarter balanced assessment.
 - English rates
 - Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders – 28%
 - Black/African American – 33%
 - Hispanic/Latino of any race(s) – 37%
 - American Indian/Alaskan Native – 44%
 - Two or More Races – 54%
 - White – 62%
 - Asian – 68%
 - Math rates
 - Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders – 17%
 - Black/African American – 25%
 - Hispanic/Latino of any race(s) – 26%
 - American Indian/Alaskan Native – 33%
 - Two or More Races – 43%
 - White – 51%
 - Asian – 65%

Resolution 869 - Came after two equity audits of VPS by a third party that addressed multiple issues. The first was specific to discipline in line with the commitment made to the

Attorney Generals Office. The send audit was a bit broader and covered board policy, district programs, curriculum/assessments, district instructional practices, district hiring and placement practices, school building resource allocations and culture and climate. Resolution 869 was then the development of the VPS Board of Directors Condemning Racism and Establishing Policy Directives on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Excellence in Education.

- Steps taken to begin addressing Disproportionate rates of discipline
 - Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) – an assessment that provides valuable information about your own mindset/competence towards cultural differences and commonality and helps identify your ability to communicate cross culturally. Test taken by all teachers, faculty, and staff in VPS.
 - Primary orientations you can test into
 - Denial- misses differences
 - Polarization – judges differences
 - Minimization – de-emphasizes differences
 - Acceptance – deeply comprehends differences
 - Adaptation – bridges across differences
 - Results
 - 1.2% Denial
 - 11.60% Polarization
 - 58.60% Minimization
 - 23.10% Acceptance
 - 5.50% Adaptation
 - Stakeholder Engagement and Soliciting Feedback
 - Equity Advisory Committee
 - Group of 12 community members (75% people of color)
 - Hired the equity consultants to come and serve to monitor the equity work going on in the district along with reporting back to the Superintendents of VPS regarding policy.
 - Discipline Equity Steering Committee (25% people of color)
 - Group of community and staff members
 - Climate and Culture Survey
 - Interviews
 - Listening sessions with students, staff, and parents
- Audit Recommendations addressed specifically in the VPS equity policy
 - Develop a culture of equity
 - Build internal capacity
 - Adopt a more equitable (vs. equal) funding formula
 - Plan for change by engaging stakeholders
 - Identify goals
- Building of VPS Equity Policy
 - Stakeholder engagement and Soliciting Feedback
 - Community equity advisory group (16 meetings)
 - Focus Groups, listening session and interviews (84 Sessions)
 - Town hall
 - Climate and Culture Survey (7,690 Responses, half people of color)
 - 3,357 students

- 1,001 staff
- 3332 parents
- Thought exchange (883 thoughts shared)

Equity policy adopted on February 8, 2022 – after 6 months of committee, stakeholder and community conversations.

- Equity Policy Goals
 - **Student Learning** - Enhance academic supports and processes to increase student learning.
 - **Culture & Climate** - Increase student and staff sense of belonging.
 - **Deploy Resources** - Achieve equitable outcomes for students in alignment with student equity action plans.
 - **Curriculum and Evidence-Based Instructional Practices** - Advance student learning through cultural connections.
 - **Equity Lens** - Application of a student equity lens for policy amendments and adoption.
 - **Professional Staff** - Hire and retain professional staff whose practices align with the district's equity policy and goals.
- Operations being put in place to obtain the equity goals
 - **Student Learning** - Professional Learning Communities-Guiding Coalition
 - **Culture & Climate** - Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity Book Study and Affinity Groups partnered with Evergreen School District
 - **Deploy Resources** - Equity Differentiated Funding
 - **Additional Fund allocation** - to assist in the equity work within the schools
 - Two million additional funds allocated to the schools within VPS over the previous two school years.
 - **Curriculum and Evidence-Based Instructional Practices** - Universal Design for Learning Communities of Practice
 - teaching teachers to be prepared and ready for the students that come into their classrooms in a way that is culturally responsive.
 - **Equity Lens** - Used for Decision Making (e.g. Programs of Choice)
 - **Professional Staff** - Leaders for Equity and Advancing Diversity Program
 - 18 people of color working towards their principal credentials

3:47pm – Public Comment – One audience member made public comment

3:50pm – Discussion – Commissioners and Commission staff iron out the details of extending public meeting times to allow for time for Commissioner touch bases and Committee work session.

1:05 pm – Motion to make Commission Meetings 12pm-4pm with the first hour being a working hour by Commissioner Laney

Vice Chair Todd called for vote - no objections. Motion carried.

4:10pm – Meeting Adjourned