

1 **Lake Region Union High School Ad Hoc Equity Study Committee Meeting**
2 **Lake Region Union High School - Orleans, Vermont**
3 **Meeting Held on Google Meet**
4 **Wednesday, April 14, 2021**
5

6 **Board members in attendance:** Dave Blodgett, Jennifer Edlund, Gerry Cahill, Jennifer
7 McKenzie, Linda Michniewicz, and Tammy Wiggett

8 **Administrators/Faculty in attendance:** Andre Messier- Principal, and Sharon Gonyaw-
9 Assistant Principal

10 **Community Members in attendance:** Barbara Morrow and Brian Carroll- Orleans County
11 Restorative Justice Center, Leanne Harple- *The Chronicle*, David Solomon, Roderick Owens,
12 and Martha Braithwaite

13 **Call to Order:** Linda Michniewicz, Committee Chair, called the meeting to oat 6:00 and asked
14 those present to introduce themselves.

15 **Additions/ Deletions:** None

16 **Privilege of the floor:** None

17 **Discussion of Restorative Practices at LR:** Sharon Gonyaw, Assistant Principal, shared her
18 experiences with working with community organizations, such as the Orleans County
19 Restorative Justice Center, to work through serious disciplinary issues involving students where
20 legal charges had been brought. She explained how the organization worked with the victim and
21 the accused person to come up with a resolution to the problem, rather than just a punishment for
22 the accused. She mentioned that the organization does follow-up with the participants to make
23 sure that the resolution has solved the problem in the long term. She mentioned that the process
24 can take several months but is powerful when success is reached.

25 **Information of Restorative Practices:** Barbara Morrow and Brian Carroll, of the Orleans
26 County Restorative Justice Center, provided information regarding restorative practices. They
27 mentioned that restorative practices are most powerful when embedded in the school community
28 and the school culture. Restorative practices can support students in taking more personal
29 responsibility for their actions, and they can support teachers in communicating with students
30 consistently in order to support this. Rather than focus on who broke rules and what punishments
31 should be handed down, restorative practices focus on what happened, who was harmed, how the
32 harm can be repaired, and what can be done to ensure the harmful action doesn't happen again.
33 Barbara and Brian have seen schools do complete turn-arounds in their environment by
34 implementing restorative practices. Restorative practices can help disenfranchised students feel
35 more part of the system. It was mentioned that successful implementation of restorative practices
36 takes time, training, and mentoring or coaching for those who are responsible for the
37 implementation. They mentioned that there are schools around the state that are further along in
38 implementing restorative practices, and that it would be worth reaching out to these schools for
39 more information and guidance.

40 Roderick Owens and Martha Braithwaite mentioned the importance of supporting the racial
41 literacy of teachers who would be implementing restorative practices. Teachers would need to
42 see and respond to micro-agressions, which often happen publicly in front of the community, and

43 they would need to understand their own place of privilege and power in order to effectively hold
44 space for everyone in the circle.

45 Sharon Gonyaw raised concerns related to protecting the confidentiality around what students
46 may disclose in a circle. She also raised concerns regarding the ability of teachers, who are not
47 trained counselors, to support students who may disclose sensitive information.

48 **Summary and Next Steps:** The committee agreed to meet again in order to continue the
49 discussion. Many committee members expressed interest in crafting a list of recommendations
50 that could be brought back to the full board. Linda Michniewicz agreed to create an agenda and
51 set a date for the next committee meeting and communicate those to committee members in the
52 near future.

53 **Adjournment:** Linda Michniewicz thanked Barbara Morrow and Brian Carroll for their
54 presentation. She thanked committee members for their thoughtful participation. She adjourned
55 the meeting at 7:32 pm

56

57 Respectfully submitted,

58 Tammy Wiggett

59