

## MINUTES

Eugene School District 4J Equity Committee  
Parr Room—200 North Monroe Street  
Eugene, Oregon

April 22, 2008  
4:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Jim Garcia, Alicia Hays, Helen Towle, Arbrella Luvert, Maria Thomas, Charles Martinez, Larry Soberman, Jeralyn Beghetto, Bruce Stiller, Peter Tromba, Guadalupe Quinn, Jason Mak, Twylla Souers, Ann Christenson, Jim Garcia, Belinda McClain, Peter Tromba Jane Waite, Sarah Lauer, ,members; George Russell, Superintendent; Carmen Urbina, committee staff; Surendra Subramani, Tom Henry, Jim Conaghan, 4J staff.

**ABSENT:** Michael Kerrigan, Alan Merrill, Jerry Rosiek, Jane Farrell.

**GUESTS:** Kelly Nardo, Committed Partners for Youth; Yvonne Stumps, NAACP; Tony Baker, Community Policing Commander, Monroe Street Station.

### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Peter convened the meeting at 4:40, and those present introduced themselves.

Ms. Urbina announced that Mr. Kerrigan, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Rosiek were excused.

### **II. Public Comment**

No one expressed a wish to speak.

### **III. Equity Committee Review/Comments/Discussion – Equity Report Presentation to School Board**

Mr. Garcia gave an update on Lane Community College's Expanded Options. The school district will sponsor students to LCC and offer them three types of leadership classes. The idea is to have a year-long connection with students who work in the summer. The school district will pay for tuitions and books for two classes per term: Chicano Latino Leadership, college study skills and possibly, one other class.

Ms. Hayes invited the group to attend a forthcoming youth empowerment study seminar.

Mr. Marshall reviewed the presentation he made to the school board and handed out copies of his remarks. He said that it was clear to him that the remarks had not been reviewed by the community and that most people agree that equity is a problem or fail to realize the committee's efforts to deal with it.

Ms. Waite complimented Mr. Marshall on addressing the committee's concerns about the achievement gap and the different ways of looking at the problem.

Ms. Luvert appreciated Ms. Hayes comments about the achievement gap in the newspaper

Mr. Marshall said that he felt it was important to look at the achievement gap on a building by building

basis and that in that way, perhaps closing the gap would become a matter of pride.

Mr. Russell arrived at 5:40 p.m.

Ms. Burke explained that she had been unaware of the achievement gap for 28 of her 30 years in the community. When she learned about it, she went to the NAACP and asked to be part of the education committee. She said that she had wondered why her daughter's grades were not better and when she asked the teachers and administrators, was told "We have so many students."

Ms. Waite opined that just as one day is not enough to celebrate Earth Day, awareness of things like Black History should not be celebrated only for a month.

Ms. Souers quoted Yogi Berra. "This is like déjà vu." She felt as though much hard work had been done, but averred that the problem had not improved.

The committee continued their discussion on ways of closing the achievement gap.

Mr. Mak, a new member, commented that this was his first meeting and described a leadership class he had just completed on the "Power to Influence Anything". One of the allegories that had been drawn in the class, he said, was that of cars driving off a broken bridge. Should the emphasis be on saving people floundering in the water or warning drivers heading towards the chasm? He asked if anyone had gone out to ask dropouts and their families if there was anything that could be done to have kept them in school.

Mr. Peter agreed and suggested that disaggregate suspension be looked at on a building-by-building basis.

Ms. Quinn averred that the committee had been talking about the same subject meeting after meeting and noted that benchmarks had yet to be established.

Mr. Stiller suggested establishing a 10-year action plan to follow the progress of individual students through their school careers might be of most service to the District.

#### **IV. Diversity Mapping Project - Discussion**

Mr. Peter introduced consultant John Lenssen. Mr. Lenssen outlined six recommendations he had summarized from the "75 pages of charts and 12 pages of findings" he had compiled on the district.

Several committee members suggested that the board return to a district wide curriculum rather than letting it be decided on a site-by-site or building-to-building basis.

#### **V. Next Steps**

Mr. Peter suggested that for the next meeting, the committee start thinking about specific recommendations for the district.

Mr. Marshall adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

*(Recorded by Carolanne Sudderth)*