

MINUTES

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

February 26, 2008
4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Marshall Peter, Chair; Jane Waite, Vice Chair; Michael Carrigan, Jim Garcia, Alicia Hays, Sarah Lauer, Belinda McClain, Alan Merrill, Guadalupe Quinn, Jerry Rosiek, Larry Soberman, Twila Souers, Bruce Stiller, Surendra Subramani, Peter Tromba, members; Carmen Urbina, committee staff; Superintendent George Russell; Tom Henry, Jim Conaghan, 4J staff.

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Peter convened the meeting and those present introduced themselves.

Public Comment

There was no one wishing to speak.

Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies

Ms. Urbina distributed an excerpt from the district's *Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook* regarding student interaction with law enforcement officers on school property. She said that Patrick Hughes with Risk Manager would be reviewing the current policy with a wide range of district personnel. She said the policy had not been reviewed and updated in several years, despite a contract requirement that it should happen every two years. She said that training should be provided to staff on implementing the policy.

Mr. Stiller suggested that the Equity Committee review the policy and determine whether the problem was the policy or implementation of it.

Ms. McClain commented that she had experienced a similar situation to that discussed at the committee's previous meeting and she wrote a letter to school administrators specifying her wishes regarding questioning her children.

Mr. Tromba invited Ms. McClain to participate in the district's discussion of the current policy.

Ms. Urbina said she would invite law enforcement representatives to subsequent meetings once staff and committee members had identified specific concerns. Mr. Peter, Ms. McClain, Mr. Tromba, Ms. Waite and Mr. Merrill said they were interested in participating in the discussion.

Equity Committee Overview - Welcome New Members

This item was postponed.

Shaping 4J's Future Update

This item was postponed.

Equity Data Report Presentation

Mr. Peter said the data report would be presented to the School Board and invited feedback from committee members during the presentation that he could reflect in his remarks to the Board.

Mr. Henry said the data differed from that provided by the State because it was disaggregated and provided a far greater level of student achievement detail than reports from the State. He reviewed the methodology and noted that the State's change from electronic to written assessments skewed the data and the district no longer had a base for comparison, making it difficult to draw conclusions. Mr. Conaghan added that achievement standards changed last year, which further complicated using the data for comparisons.

Mr. Henry said the presentation would focus on data, but staff wanted to return to the committee with a presentation on the district's efforts to improve student achievement. Ms. Urbina said the program presentation could be scheduled for the committee's March meeting.

Mr. Henry reviewed changes in student ethnicity from October 2000 to October 2007.

Mr. Tromba suggested showing both the percent of growth and the percent of change for each ethnic group.

Mr. Henry reviewed State reading assessment results by ethnic group at the 3rd, 5th, 8th and 10th grade levels. Mr. Conaghan noted that actual numbers as well as percentages were shown on the charts.

In response to a question from Ms. Waite, Mr. Peter said low SES data was not included in the charts to allow a focus on the needs of ethnically diverse students.

Mr. Rosiek urged displaying and comparing SES data across ethnic groups if that information was available. He felt it was not safe to draw conclusions based only on ethnicity and factors should be cross-referenced if possible. Mr. Henry agreed and said it was also important to use a growth model rather than a snapshot in time as the report looked at different cohorts each year.

Committee members and staff discussed the importance of considering both SES and ethnicity, but not allowing SES to discount lack of performance on ethnicity as attributable to economic status.

Mr. Peter summarized the committee's interest in socio-economic status as well as race as predictors of student achievement and the ability to disaggregate by SES and ethnicity and relate that to performance would be a valuable diagnostic tool.

Mr. Henry continued the review and discussion with the reading assessment results for economically disadvantaged, special education, LEP and all students. He reviewed State math assessment results by ethnic group at the 3rd, 5th, 8th and 10th grade levels and for economically disadvantaged, special education and LEP students.

Mr. Merrill asked if the move in testing methodology away from written tests had affected student performance. Mr. Soberman said research indicated testing methods were comparable; the ability to

take multiple tests had a larger impact on results.

Mr. Henry discussed graduation and dropout rates. Mr. Conaghan noted the rates could be calculated and viewed in several different ways and the district was trying to develop a consistent definition to use when presenting and analyzing statistical reports.

Mr. Stiller reviewed statistics related to reports of harassment, discrimination, intimidation and bullying in the last four school years. He noted that the level of reports was highest at the elementary level and drop significantly by high school.

Mr. Peter questioned the reliability of data and whether information was being uniformly and accurately collected across schools. Mr. Henry said information would be presented on a school-by-school basis, including a determination of the reasons for variations at specific schools.

Mr. Stiller commented that elementary and middle schools had programs in place that raised students' awareness and high school students were less likely to report incidents.

Ms. Urbina pointed out that cyberbullying was becoming much more prevalent and there were no clear guidelines for dealing with it. She suggested the committee could examine existing policies and consider ways to provide more training and support for faculty and staff.

Ms. Waite agreed that it was important to provide training to staff so they could provide a safe reporting environment for students.

Mr. Stiller reviewed harassment and discrimination reports by basis during the 2006-07 school year.

Mr. Merrill said he would like to see the data broken down by elementary, middle and high schools.

Mr. Rosiek suggested that the data could be broken out in a number of ways, such as ratio of incidents to target population.

Ms. Quinn asked if complaints were categorized at the discretion of administrators. Mr. Stiller replied that staff was trained on the definitions in order to appropriately assign complaints.

Mr. Stiller reviewed data by ethnicity for suspensions and expulsions and commented that the disproportionality of suspensions was decreasing. He said data included in school and out-of-school suspensions.

Mr. Merrill asked if suspension data accounted for multiple suspension of one student. Mr. Stiller said that the data had been analyzed in depth two years ago and regardless of how it was assessed, disproportionality was still an issue.

Ms. Waite said the point of referral should also be assessed to determine if certain staff members had a much higher rate of referral.

Mr. Rosiek said the conditions that caused behavior that resulted in suspension should also be considered.

Mr. Henry agreed to continue the presentation and discussion at the next meeting.

Update - Expanded Option Program

This item was postponed.

Next Meeting - Comments

Ms. Urbina distributed informational flyers for the Raza Unida Youth Conference for Latino Youth, Educators of Color Job Fair and Latino Family Conference.

Mr. Peter asked committee members to email any points they wanted to see addressed when the equity data was presented to the Board.

Ms. Hays said that Eastside and Charlemagne were identified in the alternative school review as needing to work on issues of inclusion. She asked that the issue be placed on a future Equity Committee agenda.

The next meeting was scheduled for March 18, 2008.

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The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)