

Equity Committee  
Equity Committee Minutes  
Eugene School District 4J

November 27, 2007  
4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Marshall Peter, Chair; Andy Gottsman, Vice Chair; Jane Waite, Abrella Luvert, Quadalupe Quinn, Bruce Stiller, Belinda McCain, Superintendent George Russell, Michael Carrigan, Larry Soberman, Alicia Hayes, Surrendra Subramani, Larry , Larry Soberman, members; Carmen Urbina, Jerilyn Beghetto, Helen Towle, School District 4J staff.

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Those present introduced themselves.

**II. Public Comment**

There was no one from the public wishing to offer comment.

**III. Updates**

Mr. Peter reordered the updates pending the arrival of Ms. Urbina and Superintendent Russell.

Mr. Peter distributed copies of the TRIPOD survey.

- **Presentation—Bully Prevention Program**

Mr. Stiller provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Bully Prevention in Positive Behavior Support*, copies of which were provided to members.

Mr. Subramani arrived during the presentation.

Mr. Stiller described the approach being used, which was to define, teach, and reward school-wide behavior expectations; teach all children to identify and label inappropriate behavior; teach students a “stop sign” to give when they encounter inappropriate behavior; and teach students what to do when someone gives the stop sign. He overviewed the three-step process taught students, “stop, walk, and talk.” Students were also taught how to respond to a request to stop.

Mr. Stiller shared information regarding how reports of inappropriate behavior were followed up on. He noted that perpetrators were coached as part of the follow-up, and said that chronic victims and perpetrators received check-ins and positive reinforcement.

Mr. Stiller shared data collected at Edgewood Elementary School to demonstrate the positive results of interventions.

Ms. Urbina and Superintendent Russell arrived.

Ms. Beghetto commended the positive results of the program and noted that the parents of students also

practiced the same signals at home to reinforce them. Older students had difficulty with the signals initially but used them when faced with inappropriate behavior. She said the data reflected reported incidents, which went down, but she also felt it reduced unreported behavior by empowering students. She emphasized the importance of teaching the entire student body the same signals at the same time. She said that study showed there needed to be more follow-up lessons for the program to remain effective.

Mr. Stiller noted that schools currently participating in the program indicated a video modeling behavior would be useful, and that students needed to be reminded of "stop, walk, talk." Ms. Beghetto believed continued staff buy-in was also important.

Mr. Stiller suggested a more "cool" signal like "not cool!" would work better at the middle school level, and suggested that schools might design their own signals with student input. Mr. Gottesman thought the current, simple signal worked well with middle-school students. Mr. Stiller agreed. He thought a middle school signal would work at high school as it was delivered respectfully.

Ms. Waite asked when the program would be extended to all elementary schools. Mr. Stiller anticipated the program would be expanded and each year he worked with the principals to encourage participation.

Mr. Peter expressed appreciation for Mr. Stiller's work. Referring to the issue of data collection, he suggested that if the district incorporated an expectation of data collection in the training, the district might have more uniform data. Mr. Stiller concurred. He said that it was something staff needed to address.

Ms. Waite commended the training given to recipients of the signal as being very important for the student involved. Mr. Stiller said that in the case of chronic perpetrators, it was no longer a question of coaching, but referral.

- **TRIPOD Project**

Ms. Urbina recalled a request from the committee to see the survey. Mr. Soberman recommended that members review the survey and ask Lori Moses to attend the next meeting to answer committee questions. There was general concurrence.

At this point, Mr. Peter tested the December meeting date with members, and members agreed to meet on December 18, 2007.

- **Update on ExEL**

Superintendent Russell provided the update, reminding the committee of the district's involvement in the Wallace Project and the funding that came through the project. As part of a new initiative, the Wallace Project had funded a program with several states involving sending teams to Harvard to a program called ExEL, Excellence in Education Leadership. Several teams from Oregon, including one from Eugene, were being funded. He said that expanded teams participated in Instate Institutes provided by Harvard faculty. Eugene's team had 15 members and met monthly with a focus on teaching and learning and establishing a coherent system around a focus on student learning and instruction. It was based on the "Pelp framework," a triangle including student, teacher, and content. The result was a system more effectively focused on student core. The project was funded for three years and the teams would begin to share learning across the district. He anticipated discussion of a state framework that to address state-level issues such as assessments. Mr. Peter was involved and was traveling to Portland as part of the instate institute later in the week.

Mr. Peter said the program was very demanding in terms of required readings and was a very dense

undertaking. He believed that there was a possibility that those involved in managing the district and in collective bargaining and others concerned about the well-being of students might be able to sit down together and discuss a shared focus. He found that very exciting. He anticipated hard work ahead but believed there were some neat possibilities that could come out of the program.

- **Update Response Team**

Ms. Waite reported that the students involved in the program were nominated in Portland and Eugene for peacemaker awards. The students were given a special group focus award in Portland and Peace Hero awards in Eugene. She said the students did a good job of presenting themselves at the conferences.

Ms. Waite said the team was trying to develop more structure around the program to make it more sustainable and more an integral part of education, and the adults would soon meet in a retreat to discuss communication and goals. She said that Northwest Regional Lab did an article on the work the kids did in the spring entitled "Bridging Barriers," copies of which she would provide to the committee. She anticipated that *The Oregonian* would also do a story soon. She commended the dedicated work of the students, who would not let the work go.

Ms. Luvert commended the outstanding work of the students at the Peace Conference.

Ms. Waite noted that North Eugene High School, Churchill, and Roosevelt High Schools also received school awards.

Mr. Stiller asked about the potential of the work being done trickling down in the middle schools. Ms. Waite said the students believed it was important to work with students as young as possible, and they were focusing on the middle schools and in some cases had reached out to the middle school principals in their districts. The students wanted to both interact with students and create materials that made it possible to integrate the training into the curriculum.

Ms. Urbina said the program was new for the 4J response team. The work had been wonderful and challenging, and the team was learning from those challenges. She suggested that the retreat could be a first step toward the in-district agreements, noting that Portland had dedicated a staff person to the Roosevelt effort. Ms. Waite said the team was working hard to make the program more sustainable. The students had been patient but they wanted to move forward, and the teams had not been able to support their work to the degree needed. Ms. Luvert emphasized the importance of funding for such things as transportation between communities.

Mr. Stiller suggested the teams were building a new model as they went along and fits and starts were to be expected. Ms. Waite agreed. She said that Superintendent Castillo and Pat Burk had both been supportive of the program, but the question was how to make it operational.

Mr. Stiller suggested the teams had the ability to create a model that could be replicated. Ms. Waite concurred.

Mr. Peter inquired as to the status of the mapping project. Ms. Luvert said that it was essentially complete but Mr. Ludson's report to Superintendent Russell was not done yet. Superintendent Russell anticipated he would receive the report before the winter break. Mr. Peter observed that the process had taken longer than he anticipated. He was eager to get the report, which he anticipated would be well-done, and decide where to go from there.

- **Update—Human Resources**

Ms. Towle provided the update, saying she anticipated she would have a draft work plan by January 2008 and would share that with the committee. She anticipated that diversity would be integrated into every element of the work plan. She would welcome the committee's feedback. Ms. Towle recalled the concerns she had expressed to the committee about work force data collection and said it was possible the report on demographics would be postponed to give staff time to develop a different way to collect the data.

Ms. Waite noted the interest expressed at the Education Service District in having better countywide demographic data collection. Ms. Towle asked if that would happen soon. Ms. Waite said it just came up that day but she believed it could. She said that the smaller districts in particular lacked data. She invited further conversation with Ms. Towle.

Ms. Towle welcomed feedback and ideas from committee members.

- **Equity PowerPoint**

Mr. Peter termed the presentation an "unfolding process." He understood there were issues about comparability data. He hoped that the committee could view the final PowerPoint presentation at its January 2008 meeting, at which time it could provide input that would form the basis for a later presentation to the school board meeting, yet to be scheduled.

Mr. Carrigan left the meeting.

#### **IV. Leadership Election**

Mr. Stiller nominated Mr. Peter for the position of chair. Ms. Luvert seconded the nomination.

Mr. Gottesman nominated Ms. Waite for the position of chair. Ms. Quinn seconded the nomination.

The committee unanimously elected Mr. Peter and Ms. Waite as chair and vice chair.

Ms. Hayes left the meeting.

#### **V. "Ask a Mexican" Column**

Ms. Quinn said a community group was meeting with the representatives of the *Eugene Weekly* to discuss its concerns about how the "Ask a Mexican" column published in the paper portrayed the Latino community. She believed the column portrayed the Latino community in a stereotypical and negative manner at a time when immigrant populations were already under pressure. She said the community group intended to ask the *Eugene Weekly* to consider discontinuing the column, which was by a syndicated columnist based in Los Angeles. Committee members briefly discussed the language used in the column and the reactions it elicited. Mr. Stiller expressed his personal support for the effort of the community group.

Ms. Quinn indicated she would report back to the committee with the results of the meeting.

Mr. Peter reported that poster artist Richard Favela had passed away. Mr. Favela, who had prepared a poster for the district, had been a member of the RCAF, the revolutionary poster artists who supported the work of César Chavez. Mr. Peter had written his widow a letter on behalf of the committee and community. He hoped to prepare a small card to go under the district's poster explaining who the artist was and his

significance.

## **VI. Meeting with Subcommittees**

Ms. Urbina provided an update on current activities and indicated she would send a copy out to committee members.

The committee briefly discussed a concern expressed by Mr. Peter about the lack of consistent comparable data about harassment, bullying, and discrimination.

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

*(Recorded by Kimberly Young)*