

MINUTES

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

September 23, 2008
4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Jane Waite, Vice Chair; Jeralynn Beghetto, Paul Bessemer, Michael Carrigan, Jim Garcia, Alicia Hays, Carl Hermann, Sara Lauer, Arbrella Luvert, Jason Mak, Guadalupe Quinn, Jerry Rosiek, Larry Soberman, Twila Souers, Bruce Stiller, Surendra Subramani, Maria Thomas, Peter Tromba, Carmen Urbina, members; George Russell, 4J staff.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Waite convened the meeting and those present introduced themselves.

II. Public Comment

Mr. Rosiek stated that grass roots political action in the community lead the University of Oregon to respond substantively and constructively to campus protests in 2004. The University undertook a comprehensive transformation of the teacher education program to sufficiently address issues of cultural competence, class and gender equity, and LGBTQ issues. The University was internationally acknowledged for special education teacher training, but had not invested in other dimensions of diversity. New faculty hires and direction from the University administration led to a comprehensive transformation of the department, through replacement of 75 syllabi and removal of syllabi for courses from undergraduate through doctorate programs, and replacement of four degree programs. The transformation process would be completed by the end of 2008. The remaining work consisted of the external review and evaluation of the degree programs to determine if they warrant doctoral level at a research university. He attributed the success to lots of work by many people over a long period.

Mr. Subramani concurred with Mr. Rosiek, noting many people came forward to help the college move forward. Michael Bullis, Dean of the College of Education, was responsible for bringing about the change and there were more changes ahead. There was a need to develop teachers who were conscious of social justice through training teachers to participate in social service. It was important to ensure students have expertise in mathematics and English with implementation occurring during the winter term and to ensure students in the school district had the capacity to enroll in the University. Various recruiting measures would be explored with the school districts to fill the pipeline with incoming students and to ensure there was sufficient support at the University to enable the students to be successful.

Ms. Luvert announced an invitation from the Diversity and Human Rights Consortium, which had been in existence since 1991, for the resigning of the memorandum of understanding to recommit eleven agencies to the issues surrounding diversity and equity on October 14, 2008 8:30 a.m. and the Springfield Justice Center. She encouraged Equity Committee members to attend and show their support. She distributed document entitled *Future Meetings and 1st Friday Schedule*, and encouraged attendance by committee members.

Ms. Hays said several teams would attend the Youth Gang Prevention Conference. She asked how would the work be done in a culturally competent way? She distributed brochures and posters on the event.

Ms. Souers said the Human Rights Commission (HRC) was in a time of transition and change, and had been undergoing an assessment process and looking at its goals.

Mr. Carrigan reported a young, gay male was attacked in the West Seventh Avenue and Monroe Street area. The Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC) would do leafleting in the neighborhood to support the man would take place on September 24, 2008.

III. Education Measures

Ms. Waite said the Eugene School District 4J Board had endorsed two ballot measures. She distributed and reviewed the following handouts:

- *4J Local Option Levy Renewal Questions & answers about Ballot Measure 20-137.*
- *Overview of State Ballot Measure That May Affect Public Education, November 4, 2008, Prepared by 4J Communications for the Eugene School Board, Revised September 2008.*
- *Resolution—Statewide Prohibition of Teaching Public School Students in Language other than English for More than 1-2 Years.*
- *Resolution—Federal Income Tax Deductibility.*

Responding to a question from Mr. Tromba, Mr. Russell opined as an advisory committee, the Equity Committee could make a recommendation for those ballot measures that fell within the purview of the committee.

Ms. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Mak, moved that the Equity Committee strongly support the resolution adopted by the School Board on Ballot Measure 58.

Ms. Quinn said the Springfield School District had passed a similar resolution. Ms. Waite said Lane Education Service District (ESD) had passes a similar resolution.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Stiller emphasized the importance of letting District faculty and staff as well as the public, know of the support. Ms. Urbina suggested contacting the Register Guard editorial board to advise them of the Equity Committee action.

Ms. Hays cautioned the committee to clearly understand the State of Oregon requirements and restrictions on board and committee members talking about political issues. As a School District Board member, she distributed envelopes which contained information about the District local option levy which will be on the November 2008 ballot.

IV. Carl Hermann—COO—Introduction and Vision

Mr. Russell introduced Mr. Hermann, the new District Assistant Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer (COO). Mr. Hermann had responsibility over all non-instructional areas of the District, including human resources, finance, facilities and others.

Mr. Hermann discussed the responsibilities of his position. He distributed and reviewed the following

documents:

- April 20, 2008 letter to George Russell from John Lenssen, containing the *Diversity Mapping: Eugene 4J School District*.
- Flow chart that illustrated the Lenssen report.

Mr. Hermann said as COO, he was responsible to oversee all the operations and ensure there was alignment within operations and significantly between operations and instruction. Additionally, he had the authority look at about the overall architecture of the District and whether its resources were used optimally in support of students' success. Finally, he was also responsible for facilitating the District's equity efforts. Mr. Hermann reviewed the documents and facilitated a discussion on the documents. He said in response to the Lenssen report, he had appointed a cross functional team consisting of Ms. Urbina, Ms. Luvert, Yvonne Curtis, to tie operations into the instructional side, and Celia Feres-Johnson to tie operations into the human resources side. The team's focus would be to assess the District's current resources and determine how they aligned with District's efforts and the Board's goals, to help all students be successful, particularly those students who were struggling. The outcome would be to develop a more comprehensive equity plan.

Ms. Waite said it was an uplifting experience to have someone in power to operationalize what the committee would like to see happen.

Responding to a question from Ms. Thomas, Mr. Hermann said parents would have input on the achievement gap, which varied from site to site, at the site level.

Ms. Urbina summarized several initiatives were occurring around parent involvement, including the Parent Support Committee, which worked with the individual schools to guide their work through the Johns Hopkins University measures of parent partnerships and the Salem-Keizer Coalition to Empower Parents. The initiative would start with the Churchill area and Kelly Middle School. Phase one would be Latino community in 2008, phase two in January 2009 targeting the African-American and Latino communities, and phase three targeting general and Latino parents in March 2009, to inform parents about their rights in the school system.

Mr. Rosiek believed the audit culture did not serve the District well in the promotion of equity because there were concerns by parents, community members, and educators had about the well being of children that were not tied to learning subject matter. If students were performing well at the expense of their sense of affiliation with community, despite the best intentions of the institutions, students would not be well served.

Ms. Waite expressed concern about the total of the District's efforts being directed solely at students in the gap, which was not a viable approach to equity. Equity did not equal closing the achievement gap, but it was one aspect of equity.

Mr. Stiller encouraged bully prevention programs. When looking at harassment and bullying data, the committee looked at office referral data, which was not the best way to measure how much harassment and bullying occurred. The best way was through student surveys that reflected a pervasive trend in middle schools. Bully prevention should be part of a coordinated equity effort.

Mr. Hermann said the focus of the District was not exclusively related to achievement, but rather the District was discussing and support social justice issues.

Mr. Tromba expressed concern that the approach at all schools would be identical, emphasizing the importance of looking at outcomes.

Ms. Souers shared a parent's concern about class size and the impact on equity issues.

Ms. Hays thanked Mr. Hermann for bringing the issue forward and wanted to ensure the achievement gap was addressed.

Ms. Luvert observed there were no teachers present at the Equity Committee table, and they should be part of the conversation, since many of the issues addressed go back to the classroom.

Mr. Rosiek said his concern with the achievement gap was not that it remedying it was not a goal, but when indicators were discussed, we were vulnerable to being held to the goal of the indicator rather than the goal of equity.

Mr. Stiller emphasized the need to multiple indicators, including achievement, and parent and student feedback.

V. Hate and Graffiti Crime Policy

Ms. Waite said Ms. Urbina was setting up a committee to develop a recommendation to Mr. Russell and the Board within two months on a hate graffiti crime policy in the schools, which would form a template for additional policies.

Ms. Urbina said seven schools were hit with hate graffiti last year. Since there was not an established protocol, each building dealt with the issue differently. She had contacted CALC, the HRC, the Eugene Police Department (EPD) as well as the Equity Committee, District facilities staff and District principals to participate in developing procedures and policies around hate graffiti. The committee brainstormed issues for the group to consider which were recorded by staff.

Mr. Tromba moved that the Equity Committee have a voice in the development of the District strategic plan for meeting graduation requirements.

Following a brief discussion, the committee decided to invite a member of the strategic plan committee to further discuss the issue.

No action was taken on the motion.

Mr. Rosiek said it was important for the College of Education to take this seriously as a professional development issues.

VI. High School Requirements

Mr. Tromba said as a member of the District Graduation Requirements Committee, which recently expanded from only high schools to middle schools. Standardized SIM tests, used as a measure of instruction and student learning, had had no relevance to students. This summer, following a national trend, the State of Oregon decided the SIM tests would be an exit requirement from high school. Currently exit requirements in the statutes were in reading, mathematics, writing and speaking, with the intent of five other areas brought on over time. He was concerned that the District committee charged with formulating a communication plan for students and parents did not have a diverse representation. It represented the majority opinion and would adapt readily to standardize testing. The Sheldon area group had raised the issue of equity related to district wide graduation requirements. He was concerned the mandate would contribute to an increase in dropout rates for some populations of students. Currently, the District dropout rate had been reduced to nearly the lowest in the state by creating a dual track for diplomas, allowing those students in the achievement gap to

achieve a diploma.

VII. Changes in HR

Mr. Hermann distributed and reviewed a handout entitled *Human Resources—New Hires*.

VIII. Translation and Interpretation

Ms. Urbina offered an update on translation and interpretation. An assessment of the needs of all schools was underway. She said although state and federal requirements for signing were clear, they were not clear for spoken language requirements.

IX. Other Business

Ms. Urbina distributed the *Equity Committee Tentative Calendar—2008-2009*.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

(Recorded by Linda Henry)