

## MINUTES

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

October 28, 2008  
4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Jane Waite, Vice Chair; Paul Bessemer, Michael Carrigan, Jim Garcia, Alicia Hays, Sarah Lauer, Arbrella Luvert, Guadalupe Quinn, Jerry Rosiek, Larry Soberman, Bruce Stiller, Maria Thomas, Peter Tromba, Carmen Urbina, Celia Feres-Johnson, Laurie Moses, Cindy Sainz, Carl Hermann, members; Josué Peña-Juárez, guest.

### I. Welcome and Introductions

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

### II. Public Comment

There were no comments.

### III. Update – High School Requirements

Ms. Moses gave an update on new Oregon diploma requirements for high school students required by the State Board of Education. She passed out a brochure detailing the requirements and essential skills and noted that the brochure was mailed out within the last two weeks. She said that the Graduation Requirements Committee had meet to discuss issues around the new requirements and handed out a copy of the most recent meeting agenda that demonstrated the kind of work the committee had been working on. Ms. Moses stressed that a great deal of work was needed at the middle school level so that students could be better prepared for graduation.

Responding to Ms. Luvert's question about what schools were doing to address increased math requirements and a downward trend in the racial achievement gap, Ms. Moses said that each school had different ways to deal with those issues. She gave examples that included offering a math block class and support classes, eliminating the Pre-Algebra class, and incorporating more technology into the classroom (e.g. Smart Boards).

Ms. Hays was concerned about the availability of classes to students who failed the first time around. Ms. Sainz said that there were additional opportunities and support for students who failed classes, including taking the class over the following year.

Responding to Mr. Stiller's question, Ms. Sainz said that she did not have a rough idea on the percentage of students that needed additional support, but reiterated that there were processes in place to address problems and "catch" students who might need assistance in order to meet the requirements.

Mr. Rosiek did not feel that implementing standards-based curriculum was the only answer to

addressing the achievement gap question. He opined that educators needed to have the ability to deliver curriculum by making it relevant to students' culture and abilities. He emphasized the need to have more teachers placed in classrooms who could demonstrate those abilities.

Ms. Waite asked if the Graduation Requirements Committee included teachers from all grades (K-12), and wondered if school counselors were involved in the meetings.

Ms. Moses confirmed that school counselors and middle school teachers were a part of the regional meetings, and added that as more educators become aware of the new requirements, additional efforts would be made to prepare students earlier.

In response to teaching in culturally relevant manner, Mr. Rosiek stated that math and science curriculum had been implemented in some areas. However, he said that those practices were not included in current textbooks and were not a part of State and National teaching standards. He maintained that addressing education gaps in science and math had to be dealt with in order to prevent an increase in the stratified drop out rate and achievement gap.

Mr. Hermann agreed that new requirements and essential skills could be a trap for some students. However, he added that new standards could also serve as a framework for implementing different kinds of pedagogy that could change the way students learn and experience school.

Ms. Hays validated the importance of the conversation at hand, and wondered how to pass concerns onto the school board. She suggested that members compose a letter to the Board and/or form an ad-hoc group.

Responding to Mr. Stiller's concerns about students with disabilities, Ms. Moses pointed out that one of the goals of the Graduation Requirements Committee was to develop strategies for students in need of alternative assessments to demonstrate learning. She noted that the State Board of Education had opened the door for teachers to come up with creative ways to measure performance, separate from paper/pencil tests.

Mr. Hermann stated that he would forward concerns to the appropriate people within the district on behalf of the Equity Committee, but that it was up to members as to what the format would be.

Members continued discussion on issues regarding mandatory high-stakes testing and new graduation requirements and agreed on the enormity of the problem and the need for solutions. In response to the concerns, Ms. Waite suggested forming a subcommittee to address the issues. She passed around a sign up sheet for members who were interested in serving on the subcommittee.

#### **IV. Update – Human Resources**

Ms. Feres-Johnson introduced herself and gave an update on current happenings in the Human Resources (HR) department. She noted that the department was going through a process to determine how to align HR department goals with school district goals to help support administrators with confusing administrative processes so that they can focus on instruction and other duties.

Ms. Feres-Johnson added that the department was in the process of developing comprehensive recruitment and retention plans. She noted that the initiatives would provide a larger pool of qualified teachers and assist in retaining them. She noted that both plans aligned with the goals identified by the Board.

## **V. Eugene School Board Goals**

Referring to the 2008-09 Board Goals & Annual Agenda, Mr. Hermann reviewed the 2008-09 School Board goals. He noted that the Board reaffirmed their commitment to excellence and equity as core values and addressed the inequalities that exist among schools in terms of the ability to address students' educational needs, and how they affect student performance and contribute to an achievement gap.

Mr. Hermann said that the Board wanted the goals to include specific outcomes. As a result, the goals included Key Results which were defined as "specific changes in behavior, knowledge, skills and level of functioning that will be observable and measurable and should allow us to answer the question: 'How will we know we were successful?'"

Mr. Hermann highlighted the key results for goals one and two, Student Achievement and Stewardship of District Resources, respectively. He noted that key result #2 for Student Achievement was relevant to the Equity Committee's concerns regarding support for students to meet new graduation requirements.

Mr. Hermann noted that one of the key results for goal #2 - Stewardship of District Resources - was to complete the district's workforce diversity plan that would increase the representation of minority teachers and facilitate progress toward meeting the goals of the Oregon minority teachers act.

## **VI. Hate Graffiti Policy and Procedure Sub Committee**

Ms. Quinn reported that the subcommittee had met twice since its formation. Members discussed several issues including what constituted hate graffiti, how incidents were handled, and who was in charge of handling incidents in each school. She added that there had not been an established protocol, and that each school dealt with the issue differently.

The goal of the subcommittee was to develop a policy and procedure around hate graffiti so that each school could address issues consistently. Ms. Quinn concluded that the subcommittee had enough information to start drafting a policy on hate graffiti so that schools could start implementing it.

Ms. Urbina reported that the District had spent approximately \$12,000 to remove graffiti last year. The total did not reflect costs incurred due to vandalism or other property damage.

Mr. Stiller noted that installing video surveillance cameras in selected areas seemed to be an effective deterrent and the committee planned to look into the feasibility of installing more cameras in additional places.

Ms. Hays attended a gang conference in Medford where a professor from Portland State University spoke about the prevalence of gang activity in schools. She noted that the professor planned to speak in Eugene and asked if members were interested in attending.

Referring to the growing number of white supremacist residing in the community, Ms. Urbina suggested that learning more about these groups would be prudent so that schools could have a better understanding of the problem.

## **VII. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer (LGBTQ) Equity Sub Committee**

Ms. Urbina introduced Josué Peña-Juárez who talked about a proposed outreach plan to assess the

resources and support that was currently available to LGBTQ youth in district high schools. He referred to the handout: Eugene School District 4J – Equity Committee LGBTQ Subcommittee Proposed Outreach Plan.

Mr. Peña-Juárez said the plan's outcomes included creating a resource guide for teachers, students and parents; develop and implement training for Latinas Unidas on LGBTQ issues; and provide a report to present to the Equity Committee highlighting current support structures and current Guidelines for Adolescent Preventive Services (GAPS) within the schools.

Ms. Lauer added that the subcommittee would be discussing different perceptions held by teachers, administrators, and students to help provide support for Gay Straight Alliances (GSA's) in the schools. In response to the Resource Guide, Ms. Lauer wondered how students would receive the guide and felt that support from administrators would be necessary to help distribute them.

Mr. Stiller asked if it made sense to have a high school counselor on the LGBTQ subcommittee. Agreeing with Mr. Stiller, Ms. Sainz also suggested having a student serve as a member. Ms. Urbina offered to contact Brad ? for a recommendation.

Mr. Carrigan noted that the Community Alliance of Lane County (CACL) and Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) had done a variety of work on LGBTQ issues and asked if the subcommittee had been in contact with them. Ms. Quinn added that Basics Rights Oregon (BRO) was also a good resource.

Mr. Rosiek stated on behalf of the University of Oregon Department of Teacher Education that they were committed to developing curriculum and addressing issues around equity and social justice. He gave Mr. Pena-Juarez suggestions for researching the existing support structures within the District.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

*(Recorded by Jo Schutte)*