

# MINUTES

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

December 17, 2009  
4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Marshall Peter, Chair; Michael Carrigan, Sascha Cosio, Jim Garcia, Jennifer Geller, Carl Hermanns, Sarah Lauer, Joel Lavin, Ann Marie Levis, Lorraine Mohlson, Guadalupe Quinn, Linda Smart, Larry Soberman, Twila Souers, Bruce Stiller, Surendra Subramani, Peter Tromba, Raquel Wells, Andy Gottesman, members; Carmen Urbina, staff; Heather Norlan, guest.

## Call to Order/Introductions

Mr. Marshall called the meeting of the Equity Committee to order. Those present introduced themselves.

## Public Comment

There was no one present who wished to make comment.

## Equity and Board Retreat Planning

Mr. Marshall called attention to the date of the retreat, January 23, and indicated the committee's work with the board would occur in the morning. He reminded the committee that seven committee members had expressed interest in participating in that presentation: himself, Ms. Quinn, Ms. Lauer, Ms. Joo, Ms. Souers, Mr. Stiller, and Mr. Lavin.

Ms. Urbina asked the committee to consider three questions. Answers are bulleted below each question.

1. *What is the district doing that it should continue doing?*
  - Would like the student surveys to continue in all the district schools.
  - Summer bridge program and extended day afterschool program.
  - IPM and other programs that Larry and his group are working on -- the IPM for CLD.
  - The movement of central decisions and equity back in the central office instead of allowing buildings to choose themselves.
  - The middle and high school levels should be combining IIPM (first development for middle school). They should have IPBS at high school be one team—same idea for process monitoring, different levels of support for students with different needs. Should continue with bully prevention, refine in middle schools, and expand in high schools.
  - Recruiting and retaining more teachers and staff of color.
  - Continue the work the administrators do with Carmen around race and equity.
  - Maintain Carmen's position and the community liaison position.
  - Varieties of interventions—expand the toolbox the district has for interventions. Very significant work.

- Continue with a consistent rapid response to incidents of discrimination across all schools in a consistent manner. What we have now works in some schools but not in others.
- We should not only maintain Carmen’s job, we should give her more resources!
- Not only do we have IIPM in place in elementary schools, but teachers love it and have embraced it. In combination with the reading program, IIPM is having amazing effects.
- The meeting process that the schools go through when they look at students was defined. It was not uncommon ten years ago for adults to complain about children, and that is no longer allowed. The focus was on what the adults needed to be doing differently. Wish all members could attend an IIPM meeting because you will see different adult behavior than before.

2. *What is the district doing that it should not be doing?*

- If a child is on IIPM, send a letter home? That’s it? Very significant and need to look at how we’re communicating with parents and at what level.
- Would like the district to continue the work that Carmen has been doing with families. It has helped them become more involved and supportive of children’s education.
- Need to continue to have an Equity Committee. Need to continue collecting and publicly reporting data. Began taking more steps to differentially allocate resources. Need to maintain and extend that.
- Support and strengthen for cultural-specific support programs, make them more effective. Back to school, stay in school, programs that bring families together in culturally significant ways.
- Improved relationship with school board.
- Use of the lens of “what keeps kids safe”— We think that’s very powerful.

Mr. Lavin arrived.

- Focus beyond OSAT. Broaden ways we identify TAG kids to more fully represent who students are.
- District puts resources behind equity efforts but it is seen as someone’s job rather than a district responsibility. District needs to put more resources toward equity and stop making references to “Carmen does, Carmen will.” Stop seeing it as one or two people’s jobs and put real resources behind it.
- There are no students on the Equity Committee. Are we all district parents? Is there a way to include those voices somehow?
- Representation on committee and who’s doing the work. One of the things the district and board need to keep in mind is that no matter the type of work, it needs to be done systematically and institutionally in place. No work should be based on an individual or personality because the idea is to sustain the work when that individual is no longer there.
- Stop using programs that aren’t demonstrating student achievement.
- Assessment in terms of cultural frameworks—stop hiring staff that do not have skills sets to respond respectfully to diverse populations.
- Strengthen and consistent protocols across buildings. Are the protocols effectively communicated to staff?
- More culturally appropriate interventions and training in that regard.
- More resources that are not specifically attached to Carmen and are more broadly distributed.
- Not a fan of site-based decision making or the SST model. Do not support suspension as discipline. Disjointed, compartmentalized school days in middle schools—not a fan—smaller middle schools a start. Staggered days for 6, 7, 8 a help—things being done, but we have a lot of sixth graders we expect to behave with the maturity of a college student.

- Closing small schools is a mistake as a short-term solution – it has long term impacts. Things can occur in small schools that are harder to recreate in larger schools.
- Should not be the last to hire teachers in our area, as we currently are.
- Do not like suspensions, consider them a racially disproportionate approach.
- Stop locating alternative schools in places where well-heeled families can easily access them, but not lower income families.
- As a parent, experience that my children start schools and the teachers and class sizes are budgeted from last year's number, and my children are experiencing very large class sizes.

Mr. Martinez arrived.

- Review practice of cutting development days as opposed to school days. When we cut days available, we cut opportunities for cultural competency training, and we felt that this year.
- Smaller schools can work sometimes, but larger schools can also work. Thought it was a mistake to go to middle school. Junior high is a better way to address the maturity level of students.
- Would eliminate all the use of testing to figure out what groups of kids are doing well. The tests we have are awful. Acknowledge the State mandate but still think it is a waste of time. As a retired teacher I hear from both teachers and parents that testing takes too much time and takes away from instruction.
- Try to eliminate testing that does not inform instruction. Statewide and standardized tests do not inform instruction.
- We have computers with the potential to teach students to use multiple ways of solving problems and doing projects. Technology is a way to bring individual backgrounds into schools. We use computers for multiple choice tests that could be done with paper and pencil. Teachers give up on richer types of instruction because they cannot get their hands on computers
- Big believer that central office in district could take steps to take away site-based control that would make schools more equitable but there is a potential for a rush to judgment that all site-based things are bad. Superintendent says not all are bad. Not a cure all; some things better left to teachers. Examples: school improvement plans. Too site-based; doesn't even pay a nod to superintendent or board goals. To eliminate site council would be bad. Something in the middle would be best—goals that were set centrally and the methods to reach them developed in the schools.
- “In consultation with” – decision moved to central office in consultation with buildings. What works best here? What do you bring, what do we bring?
- Every single building is different.

3. *What is it that the district should be doing that it's not?*

- When I ask questions about things I hear response like “That's because of the State”—how can I learn to advocate for the district to make changes at the state level. It does not help me to get that response and I keep having that experience. How can we teach parents to be advocates for changes to the larger system?
- Do not think the district is addressing LGBTQ issues in a concerted way. We do not deal with terms like “queer” and “gay” like we do the “N” word.
- We need a regional process that looks at equity and equity access—Portland is doing mapping to determine where the resources are. Economic impact and access to resources impacts schools. Where things are located impacts schools. Do not think district is connecting to those resources. Portland used achievement gap to make different approach—that is part of larger conversation that we are having in smaller pieces without connecting. Coalition for a Livable Future is driving

Portland effort. Equity Atlas is an amazing resource. Mapping and analysis done so board members, staff, county and city officials start to look at decisions and land use planning – all those things connected. District and city and other folks could be looking at regional equity at last because the data makes a huge argument for change and the achievement gap becomes a community issue.

- See a need for stronger development of partnerships and networks. Need to make sure that students and teachers know what those community resources are.
- Consistent principal and teacher evaluations
- Wellness report that came out regarding administrator evaluation is a nice model.
- Aggressively pursue partnerships with private sector that can bring more resources into the schools and give more people a hands on experience of the work that's being done.
- How often do we do evaluations?
- Suggest the issue is effective evaluations—we have a group working on the issue now.
- Regarding evaluations, cannot agree on what learning is and argue about how to evaluate children. The best evaluation would be one where teachers and principals were evaluated on learning. Hard to say as a teacher what you have done right and wrong sometimes.
- Think evaluations should always be helpful because the intent is to improve the employee. The more effective an employee, the better for our kids
- Don't know if doing a good job from differentiating performance problems from learning problems. Unsure we're where we need to be.
- Clarify: Contract teachers are evaluated every two years. Probationary teachers are evaluated every year for three years. Classified employees are evaluated every year. Most people are doing them. Evaluations are occurring.
- In a school of 80 with two administrators, the span of the control of the two administrators not sufficient broad.
- Should be limiting class size; recall presentation that indicated no more than 28 students should be in any one class, not because of test scores but because that size hampered the teacher's ability to relate to students, which is challenging with more students.
- Been in classrooms where there are too many people—the classrooms are not designed for that many people and it hampers teacher's ability to monitor classroom activities.
- IIPM and IPBS are something we should continue to pursue but they take coaching. Can say for certain IPBS are not providing coaching so our ability to do it system wide is compromised.
- Do not think we are using Climate Committee as vehicle for equity.
- Staff training in LBGT issues—children are coming out younger.
- Support GSAs and black student unions.
- Teachers or staff not aware of families. Assumption that the family is straight unless somehow it's known. Not just for the students, but for the parents they interact with.

Ms. Geller, Ms. Waite, and Ms. Urbina left the meeting.

- Develop a mechanism that creates an interested adult for each student.
- Explore Leadscape implementation. Recall Elizabeth Koslepske ???? has a software system that districts can use to work on issues like this. She would be interested in making that software available and supporting the district in its use.
- Build capacity and awareness of how people are systematically kept down.
- Support students of color in taking LCC classes.

Mr. Tromba left the meeting.

Ms. Mohlson left the meeting.

The committee considered what single thing it would put about all things mentioned.

Mr. Martinez expressed concern about what he termed the district's persistent data problem but believed the board was aware of the issue.

Ms. Quinn wanted to continue to find ways to involve parents in the education of their children. She believed that parents were a key to student success. She stated that children would be more successful if their parents are involved in their education, working with in the system to advocate for them.

Ms. Souers encouraged cultural appropriate ways to engage parents.

Mr. Lavin suggested that one of the district's strongest assets was its office staff, and said the district needed to ensure they were adequately trained to deal with issues of race and to be able to have courageous conversations.

Mr. Subramani agreed with Mr. Martinez about the data question, but pointed out that the committee was dealing with cultural change and that took time. He said the district needed to have the right people at the right places, and the committee was beginning to see school administrators engage the issue of race through a variety of methods.

Ms. Wells observed that frequently momentum shifted if a key staff member left, and it was important to systematize what worked so that work done by that individual was not dependent on that individual being employed by the district. She advocated for a leadership message that was clear and consistent and did not represent lip service.

Ms. Smart said that training for staff members was critical and often the training did not reach all the individuals it should.

Mr. Stiller suggested that school failure was cumulative; one's odds of catching up were progressively worse the older the child got. School failure led to behavioral problems and conflict between the school and the family. He believed it was critical to engage families in a positive way to prevent school failure. He stressed that IIPM could not turn the situation around in one year. The district could not change the achievement gap for 11<sup>th</sup> graders by doing IIPM at grade school. He was convinced that if the district did IIPM and family outreach in combination and expand the program so that all families felt welcome and part of the process, the district's data would be different in five years.

Ms. Souers supported Mr. Stiller's remarks.

Mr. Gottesman believed that the district needed to check in with teachers and students about race and ask teachers why their students of color were not doing well and ask students if they felt a lack of equity in the classroom.

Ms. Quinn, Ms. Souers, and Ms. Levis left the meeting.

Mr. Martinez encouraged additional ideas.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

*(Recorded by Kimberly Young)*