

MINUTES

Equity Committee Meeting
Eugene Public Schools District 4J
200 North Monroe
Parr Room

November 29, 2010
3:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Marshall Peter, Andy Gottesman, Carl Hermanns, Guadalupe Quinn, Linda Smart, Maria Thomas, Linda Hamilton, Jane Waite, Sarah Lauer, Brie Stiller, Tibor, Misa Joo, Michael Carrigan, Joel Lavin, Jet Johnson, Charles Martinez, Belinda McLain, members; Carmen Urbina, staff; Kathi McCormack, guest.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Peter called the meeting of the 4J Equity Committee to order at 4:09 p.m. and asked those present to introduce themselves.

II. Public Comment

Kathi McCormack spoke in her capacity as a parent and as a counselor with the Lane Education Service District (ESD). Ms. McCormack believed that the current sustainable budget proposal recently submitted did not seem equitable or sustainable with respect to the educational needs and priorities of disadvantaged and minority students in the District. She further maintained that recent studies indicated the budget proposal to increase class sizes and to reconfigure certain grade levels would have a negative impact on minority and disadvantaged students. Ms. McCormack hoped that further consideration would be given to the equitable organization of the District's language immersion programs with respect to disadvantaged and minority students. Ms. McCormack briefly discussed how Title I students and families in the Churchill area would be affected by the provisions of the current budget proposal and cited various statistics reflecting the same.

Ms. Urbina thanked Ms. McCormack for her comments and asked her to forward her research and contact information to her so that she might distribute it to the Equity Committee members. Ms. McCormack indicated that she would do so.

III. Budget Strategies Recommendations Review-Equity Committees Recommendations to the Superintendent

Ms. Lauer suggested that the scheduled Student Survey-Harassment and Bullying Review agenda item be postponed until the next Equity Committee meeting in order to allow for greater discussion time regarding the District's budget proposal.

Mr. Peter supported Ms. Lauer's suggestion and further requested that the future iterations of the Student Survey include a field in which to incorporate comments from the survey respondents. He believed that the Committee members had been unanimous in their support of the use of a comments field on the survey.

Mr. Martinez suggested that postponing the Student Survey agenda item to the next meeting would provide additional time with which to investigate the addition of a comments field to the survey.

Mr. Peter noted that future discussions regarding the use of a comments field on the survey should address the manner in which the respondents' identities would be kept confidential.

Ms. Urbina stated that Ms. Stiller would confirm that it would be feasible to incorporate a comments field into the Student Survey.

Mr. Peter confirmed that the Student Survey discussion would be postponed to the next Equity Committee meeting.

Mr. Peter asked the Committee members how they wished to proceed with their discussion on the sustainable budget proposal and hoped that it would allow the Committee to satisfy its responsibility to provide advice and feedback to the 4J Board. He maintained that the Committee discussion needed to represent the Committee's best approach to how equity values might be applied to the District's budget processes. He further suggested that Ms. Urbina or Mr. Hermanns might provide a review presentation regarding the primary components of the sustainable budget proposal before the Committee reviewed the workgroup suggestions from their October 27, 2010 meeting.

Mr. Peter suggested that the Committee might conduct informal straw polls from its members regarding the workgroup suggestions from the October 27, 2010 Equity Committee meeting. The Committee members generally indicated their support for Mr. Peter's suggestion.

Mr. Hermanns provided a brief overview of the sustainable budget proposal and the two primary strategy options incorporated therein which had recently been submitted by Superintendent George Russell to the School District 4J Board of Directors.

Mr. Hermanns provided data and information relating to each of the following strategy option areas:

- Revenue Enhancement
- Fewer School/Work Days
- Reduce Staffing/Services & Programs
- School Closure/Consolidations
- Shared Services/Contracting Out
- Materials & Supplies/Services
- School/Instruction Redesign
- Non-Instructional/Student Support Programs
- Reserves/One-time Funds
- Compensation/Benefits

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a question from Ms. Waite, briefly discussed how the potential closure of the Family School would affect the staffing ratios for the District's alternative programs.

Mr. Hermanns referred to the potential closure/consolidation strategy and noted that, in consideration of continuing decreases in enrollment and State revenues, it would be very hard to continue to provide strong and effective programs in the smaller District schools.

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a question from Ms. Waite, confirmed that it had been the relatively small size of the Family School that had contributed to its inclusion in the list of schools that might be closed or consolidated. Mr. Hermanns noted that he would be happy to provide further enrollment and staffing data regarding the Family School or any other alternative programs.

Ms. Joo hoped that District staff would continue to provide statistical data that might be used to protect certain schools within the District.

Mr. Peter suggested that Mr. Hermanns be allowed to conclude his overview of the sustainable budget proposal preliminary to the any further Equity Committee discussion.⁴

Ms. McLain arrived to the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

Mr. Hermanns continued his overview of the sustainable budget proposal and noted that District staff continued to work with Lane ESD representatives to determine what services might be more efficiently shared or even contracted out to providers such as Lane ESD.

Mr. Hermanns stated that District staff had recently investigated how the OAKS (Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) testing tools might be contracted out to the Lane ESD.

Mr. Hermanns reported that the strategy options regarding school/instruction redesign were not anticipated to result in specific costs savings but were anticipated to positively affect operational elements such as District staffing ratios.

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a question from Ms. Lauer, stated that it was unknown if the two strategy options relating to Materials and Supplies demonstrated the same cost savings to the District.

Mr. Hermanns reviewed the strategy options regarding the use of reserve and one-time funds and maintained that those funds needed to be used very carefully. He further noted that the bridging strategy represented by the use of the reserve strategy option might prove to be insufficient when considered in relation to the total reserve funding allocated by the State.

Mr. Hermanns noted that the elements of the compensation and benefits strategy option were subject to various labor negotiation requirements.

Mr. Hermanns described the cumulative effect of the budget scenarios A and B and noted that scenario B assumed that the District would face a \$23 million deficit rather than a \$30 million deficit.

Ms. McCormack asked Mr. Hermanns for a more detailed explanation as to why the Charlemagne and Buena Vista schools had not been considered as part of potential closure and consolidation strategies. Mr. Peter stated that the Committee would discuss Ms. McCormack's question later in the meeting.

Mr. Peter reviewed the table discussion report items from the three Committee workgroups at the October 27, 2010 meeting.

Ms. Waite clarified that one of the priorities from the green workgroup she participated in needed to be listed as "high quality instruction in core content areas" rather than simply, "teachers."

Ms. Joo expressed that the essential skills item from the green group's table discussion report could be considered an equity issue.

Ms. Smart and Ms. Waite, responding to a question from Mr. Tibor, briefly explained how the green group had discussed the matter of essential skills in their discussion.

Ms. Joo maintained that most of the items from the table discussion reports could not be eliminated without severely affecting students.

Mr. Hermanns responded to the previous comments regarding essential skills and stated that those skills generally involved critical thinking, problem solving, communications skills and other core content areas. He agreed that in consideration of 21st century educational strategies it would be highly important to continue to prioritize those core content areas even in times of financial distress and constrained resources.

Ms. Urbina noted her concern for how a "super high school" as suggested by the red group might adversely affect students.

Mr. Peter hoped that the District would collectively recognize its obligation to bring all students to a certain criteria when considering the items suggested by the Equity committee workgroups.⁴

Mr. Martinez noted that the Equity Committee member was capable of providing levels of input and suggestions that were very different from those that the 4J Board members typically received. He further hoped that the Equity Committee members might use their unique perspectives to identify those strategies that might create certain vulnerabilities with respect to equity issues.

Mr. Peter responded to Mr. Martinez's comment and noted that the equity issues surrounding class sizes were very important to him.

Mr. Martinez stated that the Equity Committee members were uniquely suited to providing feedback and suggestions on educational equity issues in a way that would penetrate other more superfluous matters. Mr. Peter added it would also be necessary to ascertain any rules or restrictions that applied to the Equity Committee's specific recommendations.

Ms. Joo hoped that the discussion groups would include representatives from 4J schools such as Peter Tromba in order for the Equity Committee to better understand the pedagogical foundations necessary for the development and maintenance of strong schools.

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a question from Ms. Quinn, stated that he and other district staff continued to solicit input from District teachers, principals and staff in addition to the various public input opportunities that had been provided. Mr. Hermanns further described the various levels at which input from District employees had been solicited and evaluated.

Ms. Urbina responded to Mr. Hermanns' comment and noted that District principals had also held regional discussions regarding the proposed sustainable budget. Mr. Hermanns added that regional discussions with District teachers had also been planned. Mr. Hermanns noted that the regional discussions had been planned even though the specific details regarding potential closures and consolidations had not yet been determined.

Ms. Smart asked if District staff had held discussions regarding any revisions or adjustments to the District's regional boundaries as part of any proposed closure or consolidation strategy. Mr. Hermanns replied that certain preliminary redistricting discussions had taken place related to the sustainable budget proposals but that those discussions had not necessarily addressed any redistricting equity strategies for the entire District.

The Equity Committee members discussed with Mr. Hermanns how equity values might be applied to any partial or complete redistricting strategies that might result from the implementation of the sustainable budget proposal.

Mr. Lavin noted the importance of soliciting feedback from community groups regarding the sustainable budget proposal. Ms. Urbina agreed with Mr. Lavin's comment.

Mr. Hermanns provided a brief appraisal of the conditions and factors that had been considered in District staff discussions regarding potential closures and consolidations. He noted that the anticipated budget deficits and resulting staff ratio changes had made it clear that some District schools would have to be closed but in a manner that would support teaching and learning for the foreseeable future. He noted that staff had also considered the timelines that might be involved in potential closures and consolidations. He stated from the previous discussion regarding the shaping of School District 4J's future that reconfigurations to K-8 and K-4 levels might be involved in the potential closure and consolidation strategies. He noted from the District staff discussions that Churchill High School had been identified as a location where the number of nearby elementary schools indicated that it might be the most reasonable school where a closure/consolidation strategy might be implemented. Mr. Hermanns proceeded to outline the schools that might be closed and the grades that might be reconfigures as part of a Churchill-based consolidation strategy. He further noted that the Churchill strategy had the benefit of maintaining many programs such as Head Start and special education at no additional cost to the District.

Ms. Stiller arrived to the meeting at 5:12 p.m.

Ms. Joo hoped that the Family School might be able to be preserved as part of any Churchill-based consolidation strategy despite its location at the Arts and Technology Academy at Jefferson (ATA).

Mr. Hermanns briefly discussed the instructional and equity benefits that might be achieved through a 4-8 grade level reconfiguration in the Churchill area.

Mr. Martinez hoped that issues surrounding the socio-economic status of students and families impacted by the potential closure and consolidation strategies would be reflected in the statistical modeling used to determine specific closure/consolidation strategies for the Churchill area. Mr. Hermanns stated that District staff would continue to address such issues not only for the Churchill area but also for any other District schools that might be closed or consolidated.

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a question from Ms. Waite as to why Monroe Middle School had been targeted for closure/consolidation rather than Cal Young Middle School, noted that in preliminary staff discussions it had been determined that a 4-8 grade reconfiguration would be more readily applied to Monroe than to Cal Young Middle School. He further noted that revised recommendations were likely to be developed by staff regarding Monroe Middle School.

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a question from Ms. Thomas, stated that for the initial phase of the sustainable budget process the South Eugene and Churchill High School regions might implement a K-3 grade reconfigurations for the elementary schools in those areas. He further noted that while many students and families might object to the proposed grade reconfigurations, many areas such as the Bethel School District had proven that reconfigurations such as K-8 were viable.

Ms. Waite noted her concerns regarding the curriculum alignment and communications elements between various grade levels that might be adversely affected by the potential closure/consolidation strategies. Mr. Hermanns responded to Ms. Waite's comments and noted that there was no conclusive research available regarding the instructional effectiveness of grade reconfiguration strategies since such structural reconfigurations did not in and of themselves did not cause improved academic outcomes. He noted that it was the quality of the classroom instruction that directly influenced the level of teaching and learning in the District and not necessarily any structural grade configurations that might be involved.

Mr. Peter hoped that a consensus rule might be established by the Equity Committee that the District be obligated to help all students to reach basic criteria and that to the maximum extent possible any students struggling to succeed be held harmless from any cuts to the District. Ms. Joo supported Mr. Peter's statement and hoped that additional students would not be adversely affected by the implementation of the sustainable budget proposal.

Mr. Peter noted that he had recently offered comments on behalf of the Equity Committee during a recent public hearing regarding the sustainable budget proposal. He believed that the proposal might result in disproportionate resource investments at the K-8 grade levels that might adversely affect equity concerns.

Ms. Joo recognized that it might be difficult for parents and District teachers and staff to transition into some of the potential grade reconfigurations and hoped that mentoring responsibility opportunities would be created during any transition periods.

Mr. Peter asked the Equity Committee members if their consensus position was that the Committee urge the District to disproportionately allocate resources for students who were struggling academically at the expense of students who were succeeding academically. Several Committee members responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Smart responded to Mr. Peter's comment and believed that a disproportionate allocation of resources might make it difficult to address the needs of individual students in classrooms with larger numbers of students. Mr. Peter responded to Ms. Smart and suggested that any disproportionate allocations might employ resource allocation filters tied to the levels of poverty present in each school.

Mr. Peter commented that the Equity Committee needed to identify specific recommendations for the District that would address the equity values that would be involved in the sustainable budget process.

Ms. Quinn noted her concern for the complicated factors involved in addressing the District's equity values and hoped that any transition processes involved in the implementation of a sustainable budget process would be carefully planned by the District.

Mr. Hermanns responded to Ms. Quinn's comment and noted that the specific implementation strategies for the sustainable budget process outlined in the proposal had not yet been determined. He assured the Committee members that all of the operational and instructional elements of the sustainable budget process were being carefully considered, and that the District staff was constantly working to develop strategies that would benefit all students.

Ms. Quinn noted that she had served on transition team regarding the closure and consolidation of schools in the Whiteaker area where a large portion of the Latino population had been affected. She noted that the team and community members had worked carefully with District staff during that transition process and in a manner that had positively benefited students.

Mr. Gottesman commented that it might actually be easier for larger consolidated schools working with fewer resources to fund and provide support services related to the equity values of the District. He believed that larger consolidated schools might represent certain opportunities to address the equity concerns of the District.

Mr. Lavin believed that the Equity Committee would be able to make a significant impact through its recommendations on the District's staffing ratios. He further noted that those staffing ratios were directly related to the relationships between teachers and students where various equity issues were often unaddressed. He noted his concern that the sustainable budget proposal and resultant staffing ratio changes might eliminate younger teachers who had been better trained to respond to educational equity issues.

Ms. Lauer commented on the District's achievement gap and asked how the closure/consolidation strategies in the sustainable budget proposal might affect Title I schools. Mr. Hermanns responded that Title I students were constrained to the K-5 levels although the District might be able to bring Title I students into the K-8 levels.

Ms. Waite responded to Mr. Lavin's previous comment and noted that the sustainable budget proposal might represent a loss of capacity with respect to the District's ability to adequately respond to equity concerns. She noted that the District's professional development policies needed to be revised in order to encourage the creation of regional data teams to oversee students and to ensure that the equity concerns of students were being addressed.

Ms. Waite addressed the potential closure/consolidation strategies and noted that they were often very problematic. She advocated for the use of K-6 or K-8 configurations but hoped that the District staff and Board members would not be shortsighted with respect to the difficulties involved in reconfiguration strategies.

Ms. Thomas suggested that the Equity Committee and District staff needed to consider how gender differences affected both equity concerns and the quality of instruction in District schools, particularly with respect to how those differences might be addressed in any potential closure/consolidation strategies.

Ms. Stiller commented on his experience as a District psychologist during previous school consolidations and believed that the Santa Clara Elementary School closure and consolidation had been handled very poorly.

Ms. Stiller agreed with Mr. Gottesman's previous comment and believed that it was easier for larger schools to incorporate the social support services and resources necessary to address equity issues. He believed it might be detrimental to the District to preserve smaller class sizes at the expense of those resources needed to address equity issues.

Ms. Hamilton arrived to the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Ms. Lauer excused herself from the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Ms. McCormack appreciated that comments that had been made by the Equity Committee members and noted that they gave her confidence that her concerns would be addressed in an equitable fashion. She reiterated her concerns that the District would not ultimately support the needs of disadvantaged and minority students through a sustainable budget process.

Mr. Carrigan noted he was the parent of a Family School student and further noted that he shared Ms. McCormack's concerns regarding the needs of disadvantaged and minority students.

Mr. Peter reiterated his belief it would be important for the Equity Committee members to agree on an adopted principle that could be used as an "equity lens" for use in its recommendations to the 4J Board.

Ms. Joo suggested that the Committee members email him with their suggestions on the specific language for an adopted principle. Mr. Peter responded that he preferred that the Committee members agree on an adopted principle before the current meeting was adjourned.

Ms. Waite believed that it would be important for the Equity Committee members to consider an adopted principle less related to the four separate regions of the District and more centered on the needs of the District as a whole. She believed that the District had been hobbled by many elements of its regional and site-based decision making policies.

Mr. Martinez responded to Ms. Waite's previous comment and noted that there had been discussions previous to the sustainable budget proposal related to the use of a K-6 model for the District. He noted that he had supported the K-6 model.

Mr. Martinez agreed that the regional approach to the District policies was very challenging and that to change that approach would fundamentally alter the District's approach to high school education.

Mr. Martinez responded to Mr. Lavin's earlier comment and believed the Equity Committee might collectively serve as a strong advocate to the Board for the retention of those teachers trained to address equity issues.

Mr. Peter reiterated his hope that the Equity Committee might be able to agree on a brief principle statement that might be used as an "equity lens" in its specific recommendations to the 4J Board. He believed that recent Board discussions regarding the sustainable budget proposal did not have a strong equity component.

The Equity Committee members briefly discussed possible language for use in an adopted statement of principle as Mr. Peter had suggested.

Mr. Peter, responding to a comment from Ms. Joo regarding the nature of potential grade reconfigurations, maintained it would probably not be necessary to identify specific groups in any adopted statement of principle.

Mr. Martinez responded to Ms. Joo's comment and noted that there appeared to be groups of students who were more vulnerable to the negative consequences of the sustainable budget proposal. He further maintained that those students needed voices of advocacy to protect their interests.

Mr. Peter suggested from the Committee discussion that any adopted statement of principle refer to the expectation that the District would look for mechanisms that would protect students vulnerable to the negative consequences of the sustainable budget proposal.

Ms. Joo maintained there were groups of students in the District that had never been directly affected by the negative consequences of previous budget cut strategies.

Mr. Peter noted the Committee's general agreement on the position that students who were academically struggling or who came from poor families were disproportionately likely to have lower academic outcomes and school success. Mr. Peter further noted the Committee's general agreement that it would collectively ask the District, to the maximum extent possible, to protect such students and to allocate resources in a manner that contributed to their academic success.

Ms. Waite asked how the Committee would focus on supplemental education services (SES) in relation to its sustainable budget recommendations to the 4J Board. She hoped that the Committee would not solely focus on SES and hoped that the recommendations to the Board would be clear in their position that some students would need more resources and that others would need less.

Mr. Martinez responded to Ms. Waite's comments and hoped that any adopted statement of principle would address the potential of the District's educational systems to create disparate treatment for 4J students. He noted that such systems were often highly vulnerable to the types of changes represented in the sustainable budget proposal.

Mr. Peter asked if the Committee wished to discuss the language of an adopted statement of principle any further. He suggested that the statement direct that the District not use regions as an overlay with respect to the application of the sustainable budget provisions.

Mr. Johnson discussed the various beliefs that might be reflected in an adopted statement of principle and noted his own belief that many teachers in the district were apathetic to many elements of the District's educational system. He believed it would be imperative for the District to find ways in which to bring newer teachers into the District that could passionately serve the needs of the students.

Ms. Thomas suggested that revised evaluation practices for teachers might need to be implemented by the District. Ms. Hamilton added that revised evaluation practices for administrative staff might also be necessary.

Mr. Peter summarized the Committee's message to urge the Board to develop mechanisms whereby the District could maintain diverse and highly trained teachers who had the highest probability of achieving key instructional goals. Mr. Peter expressed that the sustainable budget proposal might represent the loss of such teachers at the expense of retaining other less capable teachers.

Ms. Hamilton commented it would be necessary to define how equity as a district value would be applied from the executive level and down to the District's schools and staff.

Mr. Peter asked if the Committee wished to relay the specific recommendation that the District work to develop mechanisms for making hiring and layoff decisions that, to the maximum extent possible, led to the development of quality instructional relationships in an increasingly diverse community of students. Mr. Peter conducted an informal straw poll regarding his question and the Committee members generally responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Martinez pointed out that other policy recommendations regarding staffing ratios and District strategies to incentivize the early retirement of more senior teachers had been suggested for inclusion into the Committee's adopted statement of principle.

Mr. Gottesman commented that over 50% of new teachers were likely to quit within the first five years and noted from his experience that a policy intended to incentivize retirement for more senior teachers might not be effective.

Ms. Stiller hoped that any attempts to incentivize retirement for more senior teachers would be used to develop the skill sets that encompassed effective teaching practices and not used simply to separate older teachers from younger ones.

The Committee members briefly discussed how well trained and effective teachers might be retained in the District and how other teachers might be incentivized to accept early retirements. The Committee members further discussed how professional development priorities related to equity concerns might be applied within the provisions of the sustainable budget proposal.

Mr. Peter maintained that District resources were currently disproportionately allocated based on free and reduced lunch (FRL) students. Mr. Hermanns responded to Mr. Peter's statement and noted that District resources were actually allocated based on the number of students who were struggling academically.

Mr. Hermanns noted that the district had put in considerable funding over the past year for interventions for struggling students. He further noted that no specific formula was used to determine resource allocations in that regard but that the District worked to identify individual students who were struggling and then to provide appropriate support.

Mr. Peter noted impressions among the community that the District was supporting its Spanish and French language immersion schools at the expense of other schools.

The Committee members briefly discussed the community perceptions of how resource allocations had been made to the language immersion schools and other areas of the District. Mr. Hermanns noted that in terms of resources the language immersion schools did not have any greater allocations than any other school in the District.

Ms. Joo maintained that the language immersion schools had been unaffected by District budget cuts for the past ten years and that they would continue to be unaffected by the provisions of the sustainable budget proposal. Mr. Hermanns corrected Ms. Joo and noted that the language immersion schools would indeed be adversely affected by the budget cuts just as every other school would be.

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a comment from Mr. Peter, noted that some schools in the District were able to offset or accommodate the adverse effects of District budget reductions through individual fundraising efforts. He noted that some smaller schools were unable to take such actions.

Ms. Joo commented that there were perceptions in the community and among District staff that the educational systems of School District 4J had contributed to disproportionate allocations of resources at schools such as Buena Vista Elementary School.

Mr. Peter commented there did not seem to be general Committee support for using FRL students as an accurate measure of resource allocations.

Mr. Gottesman responded to Mr. Peter's previous comment and noted that SES indicators did not serve as an effective determinant as to where resources needed to be allocated.

Ms. Waite suggested that an adopted statement of principle reference encouragement for the use of highly structured progress monitoring tools for all grade levels and the development of staffing policies based on those progress monitoring tools.

Mr. Peter responded to Ms. Waite's comment and asked how her suggestion might be incorporated into the discussions surrounding the sustainable budget proposal. Ms. Waite replied it was very important to identify schools where students were struggling and where progress monitoring tools might effectively be implemented. She further suggested the Committee members might help develop a list of criteria that was not solely based on SES data to identify schools with struggling students.

Mr. Peter responded to Ms. Waite's comments and asked if there was sufficient data to practically apply to the District's decision-making processes regarding school closures and staffing allocations. Mr. Hermanns suggested that the data sets referenced by Ms. Waite might be used to improve the District's instructional policies after any school consolidations and grade reconfigurations had been determined.

Mr. Lavin commented that the District's instructional policies had resulted in great gains at Roosevelt Middle School and had been helpful in identifying students who were struggling academically.

The Committee members discussed with Mr. Hermanns the manner in which the District's instructional and data management policies had or had not facilitated the identification of students who were struggling academically.

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a comment from Mr. Levin, noted that the District and the 4J Board relied on the Equity Committee to support those programs and services that used discretionary funding to address equity issues in 4J schools.

Mr. Peter noted that Peter (last name not provided) had suggested that the District shorten the school year for successful students by ten to fifteen days and then incorporate intensive progress monitoring sessions to support struggling students. Ms. Waite believed that such a strategy might be very motivating for students. The Committee members proceeded to discuss how such a reduction strategy might be implemented.

Ms. Smart believed that a reduction strategy that provided intensive progress monitoring sessions for struggling students would allow teachers working with smaller groups of students to build stronger and more productive mentor relationships. Mr. Peter commented that it was unclear how an "equity lens" provided by the Committee would be used as part of any such reduction strategy.

Ms. Joo commented that reduction strategies might make it possible for certain teachers to implement benchmark progress monitoring strategies throughout the academic year.

Mr. Martinez hoped that the Equity Committee's discussions could be framed in a manner that would allow them to make an effective recommendation to the 4J Board and suggested that the Committee review calendar reduction strategies as a cost savings measure to be offset against focused instruction for students.

Ms. Urbina briefly discussed how the Springfield school district had implemented calendar reduction strategies and also how those strategies had affected the quality of instruction at Springfield schools.

Mr. Peter referenced previous Committee and District staff recommendations to reduce the District's administration by 10%. Ms. Hamilton suggested that the reductions to the District's administrative footprint needed to be much higher.

Mr. Hermanns responded to Mr. Peter's comment and noted that certain elements of the District administration such as human resources and finance were required by State law. He further maintained that previous reductions to the District's central administration had been somewhat disproportionate.

Mr. Hermanns noted that Superintendent Russell had recommended a 10% cut to the District's central administration and that staff continued to work very hard to determine where structural reductions could be made without adversely affecting the ability of the central administration to support the District schools.

Mr. Hermanns believed it would be helpful for the Equity Committee to provide a statement to the 4J Board that emphasized the need for the increased central administration capacity to support equity initiatives. Ms. Hamilton supported with Mr. Hermanns statement but further noted that individual schools had incorporated much of the administrative capacity that was necessary to support equity initiatives.

Ms. Hamilton asked for more detailed information regarding all of the administrative positions at the District's central office so that she might determine where equity initiatives might be supported and addressed more efficiently.

The Committee members briefly discussed how they might review the administrative positions of the District's central services areas in order to determine where equity initiatives might be supported more efficiently.

Mr. Peter recognized that the Committee members had been relatively unopposed to recommendation for a 10% reduction to District administration but further recognized that they wished to collectively advocate for the continued investment in the District staff's capacity to support equity issues.

Ms. Waite hoped that any attempts to reduce the District's administrative footprint would also incorporate strategies to retract the District's site-based decision-making policies in a manner that would help centralize the District's equity efforts.

Ms. Waite stated it was important that the District's central office maintain its capacity to lead the rest of the District with respect to equity matters. She worried that a 10% reduction to the administration section of the District's central services might adversely affect the District's overall capacity to address equity issues.

Mr. Hermanns responded to Ms. Waite's comments and noted that, in working to determine where administrative reductions might be made, District staff continued to work to find a balance between those administration areas it was legally obligated to provide and the equity support capacity that District schools had asked for.

The Committee members briefly discussed how certain administrative functions of the District's central services areas might be shared with other school districts or the Lane ESD in order to protect the District's capacity to address equity areas.

Ms. Stiller referred to Mr. Martinez's previous comment and hoped that the Committee's recommendations to the Board would result in the retention and the staff and programs that addressed the needs of the District's most vulnerable students. Ms. Joo and Ms. Quinn concurred with Ms. Stiller's statement.

Mr. Gottesman expressed that the District's administrative staff were essential to the incorporation of any strategies to address equity matters and that it would be very difficult to determine where any cuts might be made.

Mr. Peter reiterated his hope that the Equity Committee might be able to develop a specific statement to provide to the Board regarding their recommendations as to how any cuts to the District might be made. He believed that the Committee had not yet arrived at a specific statement that could be given to 4J Board.

Mr. Hermanns asked the Committee members to explain in greater detail their suggestions and discussions regarding the how the regional structure of the District might need to be changed. Mr. Martinez responded that the four-region nature of the District expressly prohibited the adoption of certain policies or strategies that might improve the quality of instruction for District students.

Mr. Martinez stated that the advantage of the 4J Equity Committee was that its advocacy positions reflected the equity needs of all students.

Mr. Peter asked Mr. Hermanns when the Equity Committee was expected to provide its recommendations and feedback to Superintendent Russell and the 4J Board of Directors. Mr. Hermanns replied that Superintendent Russell planned to release a revised list of sustainable budget recommendations on December 8 and that the final recommendations to the Board would be made sometime around the middle of January 2011.

Mr. Peter responded to Mr. Hermanns' information and suggested it would be beneficial to provide the Equity Committee's recommendations and feedback to Superintendent Russell no later than December 6, 2010. Mr. Hermanns suggested that such a deadline would be useful to Superintendent Russell as he developed a revised list of sustainable budget recommendations.

Mr. Peter asked if any Equity Committee members wished to meet the morning of Friday, December 3 in order to see if the Committee's discussions could be summarized into an adopted statement of principle to be given to Superintendent Russell and the 4J Board.

Mr. Gottesman suggested that Mr. Peter and Ms. Urbina email the main discussion points of the current meeting to the Equity Committee members so that an adopted statement of principle might be developed by the Committee members through email correspondence.

The Committee members and staff discussed the scheduling of an additional meeting in order to develop an adopted statement of principle for the 4J Board. Mr. Peter determined from the discussion that the most likely meeting time for available Equity Committee members would be on Wednesday, December 1 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Mr. Peter further noted that staff would send out a draft statement of adopted principle directly after the December 1 meeting so that those members who were not available to attend the meeting could review it and provide feedback.

Ms. Quinn asked Ms. Urbina and Mr. Peter to notify the Committee members of the December 1 meeting and to make them aware that that meeting would be their final opportunity to provide feedback on the Equity Committee's adopted statement of principle for the 4J Board.

Mr. Peter asked that any Committee members not able to attend the December 1 meeting submit to him or Ms. Urbina any comments or feedback they would like incorporated into the Equity Committee's adopted statement of principle.

Ms. Urbina stated she would notify the Committee members of the December 1 meeting and the agenda for that meeting as soon as possible.

Mr. Peter asked if there was a unanimous position from the Equity Committee members that they urge they Board to pursue revenue solutions. The Committee members generally responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Waite responded to Mr. Peter's question and noted that many members of the community were interested as to why School District 4J was not as financially solvent as other school districts.

Mr. Peter confirmed that the Committee members were generally supportive of statements of behalf of the Equity Committee that urged the board to locate additional revenue sources.

Ms. Urbina confirmed that Ms. Waite, Ms. Hamilton, Ms. Quinn, Mr. Martinez, and Mr. Tibor planned to attend the December 1 Equity Committee meeting and restated she would send out a notice of the meeting to all of the Committee members.

Mr. Peter adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

(Recorded by Wade Hicks)