

# MINUTES

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

February 22, 2011  
4:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Marshall Peter, Chair; Ali Groberg, Melly Holloway, Sarah Lauer, Guadalupe Quinn, Linda Smart, members. Tibor Bessko, Sara Cramer, Matt Hayes, Carl Hermanns, Celia Feres-Johnson, Joel Lavin, Larry Soberman, Brie Stiller, Carmen Urbina, staff. Andy Gottesman, Jewish Federation, retired teacher. Maria Thomas, Family Resource Centers of Lane County. Dayna Mitchell, EEA. Arbrella Luvert, guest.

## **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Peter called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. Those present introduced themselves.

Mr. Peter reviewed the agenda. He noted that he had gone to Salem to lobby with 4J students, Superintendent Russell and 4J board member Craig Smith. Students wondered about the process for reducing staff and if there were opportunities to keep equity in these discussions.

## **II. EEA Conversation**

Ms. Mitchell arrived at 4:42 p.m.

Mr. Peter stated that 4J had a long-standing benefit from the Eugene Education Association's (EEA) work in the area of equity. It had been good to have Ms. Smart on the Equity Committee as an ongoing liaison with the EEA. In light of the economic and budget situations, it was important that the entire district stand together. This was why he had invited Ms. Mitchell to the meeting.

Ms. Mitchell said this was her first year as president of EEA. She was an elementary school special education teacher and taught at Meadowlark for many years. She had been a teacher at 4J for 24 years. She had also been a student achievement coordinator.

EEA continued to have several active standing committees, including the Minority Affairs Committee. Its charge was to promote culturally diverse participation in association activities, to represent minority interests in national, state and local affairs, promote positive change in the curriculum and instruction to include accurate ethnic and multicultural materials and goals and provide an active support system for minority educators within the EEA. It also had programs to encourage students of color to become teachers. The committee had sponsored the Martin Luther King, Jr. Poetry and Essay Contest for several years. Winners of the middle school and high school contest had presented their essay to the board during a board meeting. Bethel School District had co-sponsored the contest. Award ceremonies were held at the Hult Center.

EEA had something called Education for All and the Cares Diversity Seminar Series. She distributed a document called *Cultural Awareness and Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gap: A Series of Seminars for Educators*. A cadre of Minority Affairs Committee members was specially trained in Education for All. These seminars were available to all EEA members and 4J administrators. Other seminars, such as Suicide Prevention Training, were also available. She distributed a document called *EEA Professional Development Seminars*.

Ms. Stiller arrived at 4:47 p.m.

EEA sat on the district's Access to General Education Committee. She had attended two meetings that year. EEA thought it was important to work with the district on ensuring students were included in general education as much as possible. EEA leadership had attended the Oregon League of Minority Voters luncheon in October, where Superintendent Russell had received an award. EEA was involved with Oregon State Education Association partly by sending a representative to the Pacific Leadership Regional Conference of the National Education Association. That weekend, there was a minority leadership and women's leadership training and EEA would send a representative.

Ms. Groberg arrived at 4:51 p.m.

One of EEA's previous standing committees was the Human and Civil Rights committee, which had been on hold for a few years. EEA was now in discussions to possibly re-start that committee. The charges of that committee, which would re-start in the fall, were to: promote the civil rights of teachers and students, educate members on US government policy relating to human rights, raise awareness of violations of human and civil rights both domestic and foreign, establish communication with other labor and community organizations for mutual assistance and support, and provide curriculum and or training for teachers on human and civil rights issues.

Mr. Bessko arrived at 4:54 p.m.

At the last EEA Representative Council meeting, the Representative Council had passed a resolution about tuition equity to support the development of a path to legal residency for college-bound minors who were not citizens. The resolution expressed the Representative Council's desire to promote the legislation related to this issue. Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Urbina had discussed a screening of the movie *Papers*, a movie related to this issue, at the EEA office.

Mr. Marshall asked if everyone had received information about access to the General Curriculum.

Ms. Urbina said it had been distributed to the Equity Committee.

Ms. Mitchell said that a link for the General Curriculum was on the EEA website.

Ms. Quinn thanked Ms. Mitchell and the EEA for their support for the tuition equity bill. It meant a lot for legislators to hear this kind of support from groups like EEA.

Ms. Mitchell said that the Representative Committee meeting had been very moving. Students had presented about how the legislation affected their lives.

Ms. Quinn thought it was important to show *Papers* and to hear from students to put a "human face" on the issue.

Ms. Thomas asked what the Human Rights and Civil Rights Committee did.

Ms. Mitchell said it had sponsored seminars, among other activities. It had provided an exchange program and coordination with teachers in Mexico.

Mr. Gottesman said that refugees from Central America had been discussed, but the issue had died out.

Mr. Hermanns arrived at 5:05 p.m.

Ms. Mitchell noted that the cadre of Minority Affairs Committee members that were specially trained in Education for All had been recognized by the NEA at their Human Rights banquet.

Mr. Peter said that he was deeply troubled by the district's difficulties. He had met with legislators the day before, and was committed to working hard on passing the proposed Eugene income tax. He had attended the NAACP banquet with students, and had gone to Salem with them. Students had brought the issue of teacher hiring and firing to the legislators, saying that they did not believe these were in their best interests as students.

Ms. Mitchell noted that the rules around seniority were state law and were part of EEA's collective bargaining agreement. These rules and laws were in place to prevent favoritism and to encourage fairness.

Mr. Peter thought that anything that the community could do to “put the wind in the sails” of the discussion should be done. He offered the Equity Committee as community members who wished to help with the issue in a constructive, positive way. He thought the times called for the addition of teachers, days, space and professional development. He wished this was the conversation the community was having. He thanked Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Smart and the EEA for their work. He invited her to any Equity Committee meeting she wished to attend.

Ms. Urbina said she would add Ms. Mitchell to the distribution and meeting packet list.

Dr. Feres-Johnson arrived at 5:09 p.m.

### **III. Public Comment**

Arbrella Luvert said that she was present to speak about a comment a board member had made. She explained that she was the Project Director for the International School of Modern Technology (ISMT) Charter proposal. ISMT had not started because of the district's economic troubles. The school wished to be a friend to 4J. The school had received a \$50,000 planning and development grant in June 2010 and had begun its planning process. The ISMT was one of the three that had been considered by the board. The board had denied it and the school had asked what needed to be done to revise the application and was now in the revision stage. Two board members had mentioned equity in their questions to the school. She wished to give the Equity Committee information so that they could advise the board. She reviewed the documents. The school felt that there were other public school options available for underrepresented students, whom ISMT was targeting. The ISMT was not trying to draw students away from 4J. They were trying to draw pre-K through 9 students back. Science and technology was the focus on ISMT, which was culturally responsive. Language would also be offered. ISMT had partnerships with China and Africa and would offer college and career-preparation classes, an AP curriculum, smaller classes and a different school schedule. Every student would have an individual education plan. She suggested that the Equity Committee check out ISMT's information on Facebook.

Mr. Peter thanked Ms. Luvert for her comments. He asked if staff had been instructed to work with Ms. Luvert at the board meeting she mentioned.

Ms. Luvert said that they had.

Mr. Peter noted that he was unaware of any direct feedback the Equity Committee had been asked to provide to the school board related to ISMT, but that the group would be interested in continuing developments. He asked her to keep the Equity Committee informed.

Ms. Luvert requested that the Equity Committee let her know if the board solicited their feedback related to ISMT. She provided the Equity Committee with ISMT's *Charter Proposal*.

#### **IV. HR Conversation**

Mr. Peter asked Dr. Feres-Johnson if 4J could update their hiring processes, which lagged behind other districts', in brighter financial times. He asked whether the only available basis for making layoff decisions was seniority and how she anticipated that the process would work.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said that 4J did lag behind other districts, partly because of the way the budget process worked at the district. The Budget Committee did not start meeting until December, so decisions about staffing allocation were not made until February. By then, most districts in the state had already recruited staff. In addition, 4J did not have a staffing model to determine how to allocate FTEs (like devoting a certain amount of FTEs to each program), as other districts did. Therefore, by the time the Budget Committee met and the board made its decisions, Financial Services worked on the allocations and staffing plans were distributed. In prior years, this process had started earlier, which better positioned the district for recruiting staff. 4J was working collaboratively with EEA to discuss positions that were hard to fill. She thanked EEA for its assistance. The collective bargaining agreement allowed for earlier recruitment for some of these positions. Positions that were hard to fill were traditionally special education positions. These vacancies were posted in January. It was not easy to change the culture and internal, ingrained processes. Because the budget process started at the board level and trickled down to the Budget Committee, she did not know if there would be an opportunity to start work earlier.

Mr. Peter restated his question. He asked if this change was possible at the HR level, and asked to confirm Dr. Feres-Johnson's assertion that the change needed to be made at the board and Budget Committee level.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said that it was correct that the change needed to be made at the board and Budget Committee level. She said that that year, the board had made its staffing allocation decisions on February 2, and HR had just received them.

Ms. Thomas asked if other school districts made these decisions in a timelier manner, and what 4J's board needed to be persuaded to do the same.

Ms. Mitchell thought staffing by program would help a lot. She said that this had been suggested for the last few years.

Dr. Feres-Johnson thought it would also help to start the process earlier. This year, the process had started earlier because there were a lot more variables and the budget picture changed often. The board's intent was to start early and provide staffing allocations as early as possible. They did have an interest in recruiting early. She had also heard that because 4J did not start earlier, they were not able to hire "the

cream of the crop.” She disagreed with this statement. She felt that 4J had been very successful in recruiting strong, motivated, committed teachers and employees.

Ms. Stiller thought that this had been a definite problem in terms of hiring school psychologists.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said that this was why the district had started posting these types of positions earlier, starting about three years ago.

Ms. Stiller said that three years ago, the district started hiring better school psychologists. She asked what the disadvantages of staffing by program were.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said that there were a range of positions that were harder to fill, and that the practice of staffing by program was more expensive and less flexible.

Mr. Hermanns agreed. Program staffing was a more centralized process, and allowed more expedient movement. However, it limited site flexibility.

Ms. Mitchell said that this created competition between sites.

Mr. Hermanns agreed. There was an equity issue around all children getting the same experience. When decisions were made by site, site equity was harder to achieve. Staffing by program would help.

Mr. Peter asked Dr. Feres-Johnson to describe the layoff process.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said that the layoff process was traditionally done based on seniority, licensure and endorsement. Each principal, along with each school's Site Council, decided what was needed at each site based on programs and the availability of funds. The layoff process was very challenging and difficult decisions had to be made. When eliminations were made based on program need, this meant that some teachers had to be let go. There were provisions in the collective bargaining agreement that guided this process. The district could use a provision other than seniority if needed (for example, if two teachers had the same seniority date). These included the district's Affirmative Action Plan (this was only used in a situation where two teachers had the same seniority date). These decisions were not made lightly, and this year, the decisions would be harder than they had been in other years. The district was interested in keeping as many teachers as they could.

Ms. Groberg asked how long these practices had been in place.

Dr. Feres-Johnson explained that these practices had been used as long as the district had had a collective bargaining agreement with teachers. These practices had been decided on collectively by both the EEA and the district. Another factor that had to be considered was state law.

Ms. Groberg asked if teachers' performance was considered in the decision-making process.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said that it could be, but it was not used during the workforce reduction process.

Ms. Groberg asked how Site Council members were chosen.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said that this was done at each site.

Ms. Mitchell explained that Site Council members were elected by each school's and it was representative of the different stakeholders in each school.

Ms. Lauer explained that there was usually a vote. There were a certain number of seats on each Site Council, so that there was a broad representation and no group had more members than another did (for example: staff, students or parents). Each group voted on Site Council members if there was more than one person from that group who was interested in being on the Site Council or if a candidate needed to be sought out for that group. Site Council usually recommended certain things around staffing and program, but ultimately, the principal made the decisions about individual staff members.

Dr. Feres-Johnson added that the decisions were made based on the program and what was needed for each school. It was a collaborative process and decisions were made based on what was best for students.

Ms. Groberg asked if students could be part of Site Councils.

Mr. Lavin explained that students were on Site Councils at the middle school and high school level.

Mr. Peter confirmed that it was outside the district's and the EEA's ability to bargain for reducing the work force using something other than seniority, and that state law required that seniority be used as the basis on which reductions in work force were made.

Ms. Mitchell said that this was true except in situations where there was more than one person with the same seniority date at one site. Dr. Feres-Johnson agreed.

Ms. Thomas asked if something other than seniority could be used to make these decisions. She said that at her work site, every three years there was a new agreement because the staff's diversity changed. She asked if the district had to use the existing collective bargaining agreement for the period it was relevant.

Ms. Mitchell said this was true. She said that the EEA had just settled a new three-year contract. Certain collective bargaining agreement articles could be re-opened during bargaining. These had to do with compensation, benefits and work year. Either party could request to re-open articles in the duration.

Ms. Thomas asked if state law said that both parties had to agree on what was beneficial to both parties, and confirmed that the agreement could not be changed until the next bargaining session.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said this was correct.

Ms. Groberg asked how students could become part of the Site Council. She said that she and her children had tried to "save" a teacher at their school last year. They had succeeded somewhat – his hours had been reduced. She wanted to know if students had a voice in these decisions.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said they did – students could voice their concerns to her, to principals, the Site Council or the superintendent.

Ms. Thomas asked if each school had a list of positions that might be cut, and if students, teachers and parents knew what positions might be cut at each site.

Ms. Mitchell said that the list was district-wide.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said that the best contact for this information was a school's principal.

Mr. Peter said the Equity Committee would continue to discuss the issue. Two issues were critical: making sure as many resources to hire and keep the best teachers and offer the best learning experience were available and making sure the district was keeping the best teachers in the classroom. He thanked Dr. Feres-Johnson for her attendance.

Dr. Feres-Johnson said that change did not happen overnight, which was challenging. She encouraged all to create a space for the discussion of possibilities and to provide as much input as they desired. She said she was able to return to the Equity Committee's meetings.

Ms. Quinn said it was important to know what was happening with HR and with EEA. The Equity Committee needed to keep in mind that when things became challenging for school districts, divisions could be created. She hoped to continue communication. The goal for all was ensuring students got the best education possible, and that schools had what they needed.

Mr. Peter said that the next meeting would be on March 29. At that meeting, the student Harassment and Bullying Survey would be discussed, the EYES program would make a presentation and Brad New would discuss alternative schools.

Mr. Hermanns noted that the district's administration was concerned about the budget situation. Now that the board had voted on a sustainable budget, staff could begin to examine how to move forward. In the Instruction Department, the great percentage of funding went out to schools in direct support for interventions and other programs. The previous year, massive cuts had been made to the department. This year, at least a third of the programs funded the previous year would have to be cut. The guiding principle around this was thinking about the district's values and how to more rigorously focus funding on priorities. Another guiding principle would be an evaluation of what was working and what was not. The district had to fund only what was working.

Ms. Thomas asked how the district would determine what was working and what was not working.

Mr. Hermanns said that the district was trying to continuously determine what was working and what was not. The district was trying to put more instruments in place to determine what was working for students. These included Instructional Intervention Progress Monitoring (IIPM) and student and teacher feedback. Qualitative and quantitative data was being examined.

Ms. Thomas asked about evidence-based data that showed what was resulting in high school graduation, which she thought was the ultimate goal of the district.

Mr. Hermanns provided the example of Mr. New's presentation on alternative education. Mr. New would show that the district was catching students that used to spiral out of the system. The district was bringing these students back into the system. This was a measure of success.

## **V. Equity Data Presentation**

Mr. Cramer arrived at 5:48 p.m. Ms. Mitchell left at 5:48 p.m.

Mr. Hayes presented 4J's *Equity Data 2010-2011* as compared to the previous year's data. Due partly to

the district's new ethnicity classification definitions, there had been a three percent drop in the number of Caucasian students in the district. There had been an increase in multi-ethnic students, Native Hawaiian, and Hispanic students. There had been a drop in the number of African American, American Indian and Asian students. In general, there had been shifts away from the number of students belonging to certain groups and shifts towards the number of Hispanic and multi-ethnic students. Typically, a number of Hispanic students were also American Indian, which explained some of the shifts in those groups' numbers.

Mr. Hayes reviewed the elementary reading scores for grades three through five over the last three years. He reviewed achievement gaps between Caucasian students and students belonging to various other ethnic groups. He reviewed the same data at the middle school and high school levels. Because the state measured achievement at 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 4J also used 10<sup>th</sup> grade, although some of 4J's higher-achieving students were tested in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This skewed the data somewhat.

Mr. Hayes reviewed the data that showed the number of students meeting or exceeding at each grade level across ethnic groups. He reviewed the average OAKS reading scores for students by ethnicity for the previous year. The “meeting and exceeding” measurement was not the best way to analyze achievement, especially with math, for various reasons. This was why the average OAKS scores were used. He reviewed the number of students who passed each grade by ethnicity. The average score for African American students in the fifth grade was below the passing grade. The achievement gap in high school was also of concern. The new reading adoption was closing the achievement gap.

Ms. Urbina said that this outcome had been predicted, and it was expected to continue.

Mr. Hayes said that this group of students on which the new reading adoption was being used was the first to be progress monitored starting in kindergarten.

Ms. Urbina said that every percentage gap was reflected three-fold as they went out into the system. It was hoped that these improvements would spread.

Ms. Cramer said that she was asking principals which students needed interventions to identify characteristics and needed supports.

Mr. Hayes said that the average score for most sixth graders had been tracked for the previous three years.

Ms. Stiller said that the data showed that each group was benefiting equally, but the size of the gap might not be closing at the same rate in each group.

Mr. Hayes said that some students came in and out of the cohort, so the data was not perfect. He reviewed the ninth grade data, which reflected three years of middle school scores. He reviewed the elementary and middle school math data. He noted that the state had recently required that passing scores go up at each grade level, which would affect data. He reviewed graduation rates by ethnicity. Oregon had also recently changed its assessments of graduation eligibility. He reviewed the number of suspensions by ethnicity. He noted that while 72 percent of 4J students were Caucasian, only 67 percent of suspensions involved Caucasian students. Twelve percent of 4J students were Hispanic while 15 percent of suspensions involved Hispanic students.

In response to a question from Ms. Thomas, Mr. Hayes explained that students had a maximum of three



opportunities to take the OAKS test. Not all took it three times. The best of the maximum three scores was recorded. Tests were taken from October until May. The district was encouraging schools to not begin testing until January. High schools began testing in October. Most other schools did not begin until January. He thought this would have benefits to scores.

Ms. Thomas asked if all students had to take the tests.

Mr. Hayes said that they did, but not all scores were reported to the state. The numbers in the report reflected the scores of students the state considered “eligible.” Because of this, those students who spent at least 60 percent of their time in a special education classroom took the test, but their scores were not reported. Various other factors contributed to which numbers were reported, including how much time some students spent at another district. Average scores reflected every student’s “best” score. Tests were available in other languages.

Mr. Peter said that the Equity Committee had reviewed the report had made some recommendations. He noted that while there were pockets of positive news, he thought the report was “incredibly discouraging.” He was “stunned” that in spite of the district’s efforts, it appeared as though things had gotten worse. He noted that the Equity Committee recommended that budget decisions were aligned with need. Based on the report, he guessed that resources did not go as far as they needed to in order to produce the desired results. He asked Mr. Hermanns how instructional resources were allocated related to areas of significant instructional need.

Mr. Hermanns explained that serious questions came up because of the report and the data, because some of the data was not acceptable. The district was looking for specific ways to address these issues. OAKS revealed some good things about students and about how they were doing. OAKS would reflect whether or not the district was doing its job. OAKS did not help inform instruction and because it did not measure cohort groups, it was a “faulty measure” to examine how students progressed. Now that 4J was tracking cohort groups, the data the district was collecting was better. He agreed that the data made it look as though things were getting worse. However, there was a narrowing of the achievement gap at the third and fourth grades, because these were the students who were using a common curriculum and progress monitoring. He noted that the widening of the gap at tenth grade was a reflection of that group’s lack of a common curriculum and progress monitoring. The district was currently trying to find individual measures of student growth over time. This included progress monitoring, which revealed whether students were improving. By doing this, interventions could take place if they were needed, and student improvement could be maximized. He acknowledged Ms. Stiller’s note that the achievement gaps were not closing. This was because students who needed individual help were not being adequately identified and served at the moment. The district wished to address this. The district was facing a “conundrum” because of budget difficulties and wondered how staff could address individual students’ problems when there were fewer staff members.

Mr. Peter asked about gaps between schools. He asked how the district might differently allocate resources to make gaps between schools’ level of achievement disappear.

Ms. Cramer noted that the district had Title I funds at the elementary level. These funds were not necessarily based on academic needs of students, but were based instead on socio-economic status. Therefore, the poorest schools received additional funding through Title I dollars. However, there was a cut-off for these funds. Therefore, each year, these funds were divided proportionally. Schools with more poverty (i.e. a school where 70 percent of students were eligible for free and reduced lunches) received a higher tier of funding than schools that had 40 percent of students eligible for free and reduced lunches.

Every elementary school, and some middle schools, had regular Data Team meetings that examined students who were performing at the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile or lower based on current data. Benchmarking was done in the fall, winter and spring for each student at each subject. Struggling students were helped individually.

Ms. Urbina concurred.

Mr. Peter repeated his question about resource allocation.

Ms. Cramer said that data examination was connected to resource allocation. She said that the district had hired a Teaching and Learning Coordinator that year who gathered and monitored data. This position was funded by Title I dollars, which was based on the number of students that needed support. FTEs were also determined based on the number of students that needed support at each site.

Mr. Peter was not sure all would agree on the number of allocable FTEs. He said that the number of FTEs available and allocable based on instructional need could perhaps be determined based on student performance data.

Mr. Hermanns said that this was being examined in many ways. The calculation was based on how to focus the most FTEs on students who most needed it without “eviscerating” other schools.

Ms. Holloway arrived at 6:20 p.m.

Ms. Thomas said that she was concerned about instruction. She thought that the dropping scores and increasing achievement gaps were due to inadequate instruction. She thought this needed to be examined rather than throwing money and FTEs at the problem. She thought best practices needed to be examined.

Ms. Groberg agreed.

Mr. Hayes said that there were students with need at every school. Therefore, staff members were needed in every school that could identify need, intervene and use data in a way that would help students in need.

Mr. Peter said that he thought funds needed to be identified and moved from an area of the budget to help students in need at every school. He also wanted to provide resources to students that were achieving. He wanted further information about how resources were distributed in order to help students succeed and pass benchmarks.

Mr. Hermanns said that the district was asking these questions.

Ms. Thomas said that there was an assumption that students of color had lower IQs.

Mr. Hermanns said that the district did not assume this.

Ms. Thomas noted that the data showed that students of color were achieving at a lower level than Caucasian students. The data had been showing this for at least ten years. She wondered why this was.

Mr. Hermanns said that this was true at school districts around the country. If the district knew how to fix it, they would. The issue was being struggled with across the country. He noted that the gap was closing for 4J students who were receiving the common curriculum and progress monitoring. However, the gap

was not closing fast enough.

Mr. Peter noted that the three finalists for the superintendent's position wanted to meet with the Equity Committee on March 7. He asked that those who were interested let Ms. Urbina know.

Mr. Hayes left at 6:31 p.m. and asked those with questions about the Equity Data to email him.

Ms. Smart said that the data was heartbreaking and frustrating. She noted that there was a difference in what students could do in a large classroom versus what they could do in a smaller classroom. She said that in a large classroom, she had about thirty seconds to work with each student individually. This made it extremely difficult to target students with special needs of any kind. She said that it was shown that smaller class sizes work, however this was not currently available.

Ms. Groberg said that the Natives Program used to have tutors. However, the program's funding had been cut and the Consortium had been broken up. Because of these factors, students' performance was going down. One of her sons was in the Talented and Gifted program. The other had an IEP. She said that she knew that it worked when students were taught by members of their own ethnic groups. She encouraged the district to adopt this practice.

Ms. Cramer encouraged the group to keep Ms. Thomas' comments about students' of color performance in mind. She said that adults needed to know that they needed to understand white privilege, other cultures and cultural competence. Teachers needed to examine their practices in light of these issues. She suggested that OAKS was perhaps not the only data that should be used. She suggested the use of benchmark data (Easy Curriculum-Based Measures, easyCBM) as well, while keeping the above practices in mind.

Mr. Lavin said that he had been working with an IIPM team that had started in the fall. When such programs were implemented, gains were incremental. He was concerned about drop-offs that occurred in middle school, according to the data. He said that he felt personally responsible for this, and it seemed to happen again and again. This was frustrating. In the middle school environment, it seemed as though students were lost. He hoped that this would happen less with new systems in place. He thought it important to consider that resources put toward students, including FTEs, funding, time and individualized instruction would help students in need. He thought the district was losing ground in math and English language arts. He thought progress monitoring in these areas would make a difference. When new programs were developed in the middle schools, helping students get ready for class was not entirely understood by each teacher. Teacher development in this area was needed and would make a difference. He did not agree with criticizing programs that were still developing. He suggested allocating teacher time that was currently used on electives to individualized instruction in math and English Language Arts.

Ms. Thomas said that teachers had huge responsibilities and she understood that it was harder to teach as well as one could in an overcrowded classroom. She said that it was each school's responsibility to ensure that each student succeeded. She advocated teacher evaluation and determining the needs of teachers. She thought teachers made schools. Fancy programs were not as important as evaluation and support for teachers.

Mr. Peter requested more information on how resources were allocated. It was important to him that resources were allocated in a way that responded to the problems the district had. He thanked Mr. Lavin, Ms. Smart and Ms. Thomas for their comments. He also wished to understand what the district expected to happen with the current instructional need allocation in order to determine whether resource allocation

was being done appropriately. He had heard discussions about a pilot evaluation project.

Ms. Cramer was not sure what was happening with that.

Mr. Peter said he was part of a group led by Gerald Tindal. He said that the Equity Committee wanted to be involved.

Ms. Smart asked if teachers were involved.

Ms. Cramer did not know. She said that Human Resources would know.

Ms. Stiller said that the problem was more complex than the district was aware of. She thought IIPM would help but would not completely solve the problem. She thought CFEE could help but would not solve the problem. She said that CFEE had discussed white privilege and institutionalized racism, each of which was a factor in the problem. She said that it was not reasonable to believe that students from different cultures and backgrounds had different learning styles as a group. It was good to get the workforce in line with ethnic diversity, but many white teachers would continue to teach students from many different backgrounds. Awareness of different groups' learning styles was necessary. If the problem were simple, someone would have already solved it.

Ms. Groberg asked if multi-age classrooms existed in the district.

Ms. Cramer said that there were a few multi-age classrooms.

Ms. Urbina said that that multi-age classrooms existed more often at the elementary school level.

Ms. Groberg wondered if it would help teachers with large classrooms to learn multi-age teaching. In these classrooms, students with strengths helped students who were struggling, and older students helped younger students.

Ms. Holloway wished to have a chance to digest and examine the Equity Data. She said she was interested in high-performing schools and embracing those models. She thought this would result in success. She said that high performance was not elusive, but was without a plan. In addition, budget difficulties required planning and best practices in order to have success.

Ms. Urbina agreed with all that had been said. She said that the data represented 4J students. She grappled with the fact that the education system was broken. Gains were made, but then rules changed; For example-budget cuts, bigger classrooms, less professional development. It feels that when we start getting momentum and addressing the core issues we go back. One step forward, two steps back. Ultimately, students are the ones that are impacted. The same methods of teaching continued to be used and different learning styles continued to be largely ignored. Many issues needed to be addressed. She asked Mr. Hermanns and Ms. Cramer what the Equity Committee's next steps should be.

Mr. Gottesman said that the Equity Committee would meet with superintendent candidates. He suggested discussing these issues with them.

Mr. Cramer said she would formulate a response to Ms. Urbina's question. She asked to be added to the distribution list.

Mr. Peter said that models did exist. He mentioned Geoffrey Canada at the Harlem Children's Zone.

Mr. Gottesman said that the problem was more complicated than Mr. Peter's statement made it seem.

Mr. Peter said that saying there was no model was false.

Ms. Lauer said that a plan was needed. The status quo benefitted the majority of students, but not all.

Ms. Quinn advocated for thinking outside of the box. She said that education was not funded in the way it needed to be. Education was not a priority in this country, and people feared dismantling the system or changing methods. Student needs were increasing as funding declined. She agreed that the system was broken, and thought it needed to be changed. She advocated for pushing the powers that be who thought leaving the system as is was okay.

Ms. Urbina said she would email the Equity Report to all.

Mr. Peter adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

*(Recorded by Katie Dettman)*