

MINUTES

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

October 25, 2011
4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Jane Waite, acting Chair, Superintendent Sheldon Berman, Melly Holloway, Beth Gerot, Andy Gottesman, Joel Lavin, Brianna Stiller, Sarah Lauer, Jett Johnson, Juan Carlos Valle, Linda Hamilton, Surendra Subramani, Maria Thomas, Ayanna Moriguchi, Linda Smart, Guadalupe Quinn, Peter Tromba, members; Carmen Urbina, Sara Cramer, Laurie Moses, Tibor Bessko, staff; Celia Feres-Johnson, guest

I. Welcome and Introductions

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

II. Public Comment

Anne Bridgeman said she was present to observe but had no comments.

A discussion followed on the preparation of meeting minutes. Ms. Waite said having verbatim minutes prepared was very expensive and they wanted to change to annotated minutes that capture the essence of the meeting. She asked the committee to review the last meeting minutes and asked for comments.

Mr. Valle had two points to make. He thanked Superintendent Berman for providing information about the new achievement gap issued by the state. His issue was that whenever the standards were configured, the results over the decades had always been the same. He wondered why they wait for more data collection when the outcome was already known.

Mr. Valle's second point was that he agreed that because of the evolution of the K-12 education in America there needed to be community engagement. He wanted to know if school administrators were going to be held accountable for the spirits of the children. He believed that school administrators should be held accountable. He said there needed to be a new dialogue between the community, administrators and teachers.

Superintendent Berman said he thought there was a lack of consensus about what caused the achievement gap. He thought it would be very useful to discuss the primary causes of the achievement gap. He wanted to make it clear that the achievement gap was a national issue, not just an issue in 4J.

Ms. Hamilton had attended an achievement gap conference at Lane Community College (LCC) and her understanding was that between 2007 and the present the achievement gap had worsened in District 4J.

Returning to the minutes, Mr. Valle said that the public benefited from detailed dialogue in minutes and asked for reconsideration of changing to brief minutes.

Ms. Moriguchi agreed with Mr. Valle and favored detailed minutes.

Superintendent Berman said minute preparation cost the district between \$3,000 and \$4,000 a year. It was a question of how resources should be invested. The recording of actions and motions was the important thing to be reflected in minutes and that was what the community wanted. He said the district had been billed \$2,500 for a series of minutes for two months. Given the fact that there were classes of 40 to 50 students, he did not think that was a reasonable expense.

The committee discussed that minutes could reflect only action items and if anyone wanted details of the meeting they could request a copy of the audio recording.

Ms. Urbina said meeting materials were available on the website.

Ms. Hamilton said she did have a correction to the September 2011 minutes. On page 4 it reflected that she said the Committee be able to “see” the survey, when she actually said the Committee should “review and comment” on the survey.

IV. Presentation by Celia Feres-Johnson – Teacher Evaluation

Ms. Feres-Johnson said that in 2008 one of the Board’s goals was to review and revise the evaluation system for the entire District for classified staff, teachers, administrators, and professional staff. The process started with teacher evaluations. The first phase of the project was research to determine what components other districts across the country included in teacher evaluations. Approximately 40 models were reviewed from across the country. Out of those 40 it was narrowed down to 12 models that met the goals of District 4J. Six focus groups were formed consisting of internal and external stakeholders that wanted to contribute and be a part of the process. The Equity Committee formed a subgroup and there were focus groups comprised of students, principals, teachers, administration, and Education Support Services. Work began and the charge was to review the sample evaluations and pick one that would best fit the instructional mission for the District. At the conclusion, two models were built. The intent of the two models was to test them in seven pilot schools. The pilot schools were

chosen based on the commitment from principals, as it required a lot of work and involvement. The schools selected for testing were Holt Elementary School, Edgewood Elementary School, Howard Elementary School, Spencer Butte Middle School, Monroe Middle School and Sheldon High School.

Ms. Feres-Johnson said a committee of 30 to 32 people was formed to review the models and provide additional information. The committee was composed of board members, students, parents, representative members from each focus group, members from each of the pilot schools, and instructional directors. The first meeting was held on October 21, 2011. Both models were reviewed and condensed into one model. That model was sent to the District Leadership Team for review and its goal was to recommend that model for testing in the pilot schools. The Superintendent and the Superintendent Cabinet would review the model for finalization and the timeline for implementation.

Ms. Feres-Johnson said Senate Bill 290 required implementation of a district-wide administrator and teacher evaluation by 2013. She said the Board recognized the need to develop an evaluation system that supported the opportunity for growth and development within the educational mission.

In response to Mr. Valle's question regarding the Equity Committee's further input, Superintendent Berman said there would be opportunities for input as the process proceeded. He said it was not a hidden document and was still very much a work in progress. He said the Committee was welcome to review the draft model at any time.

III. Presentation and Review of the Equity Committee Survey

Ms. Waite distributed a draft document entitled "4J Equity Committee Survey".

Superintendent Berman said the Survey was based on a number of topics that emerged through information and conversation.

Ms. Hamilton asked if development of the Survey would cost money and Superintendent Berman responded no, other than staff time to prepare charts and graphs based on data received.

The committee convened into small groups to review, comment and offer suggestions on the Equity Committee Survey. Ms. Urbina said she would meet later with each of the facilitators of the groups to revise the Survey. The Survey would be edited based on comments received and be presented again at the next Committee meeting.

V. Bullying and Harassment District alignment Update

Brianna Stiller distributed two handouts entitled "District 4J Proposal for Reduction of Bullying and Harassment Behaviors" and "School District 4J, Action Plan Template for

Reduction of Harassment and Bullying Behavior, 2011-2012 School Year”. These were in direct response to the School Climate Survey data collected over the last two years. It showed many students felt not respected in schools. The purpose of the Action Plan was to create intervention around bullying and harassment.

Ms. Stiller said a proposal was drafted last spring and, after discussions with school principals, there was unanimous agreement to move forward with a proposal. The outcome was the proposed Action Plan before the Committee.

Ms. Stiller said there was a district-wide, four-hour training in September 2011 and each district was required to send a team of at least three people, including an administrator. Attendance by others concerned with social justice was also encouraged. The Action Plan was designed to address the fact that there existed many variables among staff members and schools as to what the expectations were around interrupting and responding to bullying and harassment. The goal was to achieve consistency, particularly around high rate, low intensity behaviors that created permissiveness around harassment and bullying.

Ms. Stiller said that in terms of a school action plan they were requesting orientation of staff, orientation of students, identification of intervention and communication with parents. One important component was staff alignment and staff orientation. Materials were given to the schools for their use and they were told if help was needed in facilitation, that help would be provided. Ms. Stiller had helped facilitate at seven schools. As a result, the schools had become more proactive regarding prevention efforts.

A discussion followed regarding the definition of harassment and the difference between the definition in the schools and within the legal system.

Mr. Tromba said, as an administrator, he felt it would be helpful for legal counsel to explain the definition of harassment within the school system so that all administrators could understand what constituted harassment.

When asked about legal action for harassment, Ms. Stiller said it was parents of victims, more so than administrators, that made the decision if legal action was warranted.

Ms. Stiller interpreted a question from Ms. Thomas as asking if administrators knew the state laws on harassment or intimidation, and how should parents of victims be advised. She thought this needed further research and follow-up discussions. She said this was something that should be looked at by the Principal Resource Group.

There was on-going interest in this issue and it would be discussed again at upcoming meetings.

VI. Next Steps – Equity Plan

This agenda item was tabled until the November 29, 2011 meeting. The December meeting was scheduled for December 20, 2011.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

(Recorded by Ginger Morton)