

# MINUTES

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

November 29, 2011  
4:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Marshall Peter, Chair, Superintendent Sheldon Berman, Michael Carrigan, Beth Gerot, Andy Gottesman, Jett Johnson, Misa Joo, Melly Holloway, Joel Lavin, Charles Martinez, Guadalupe Quinn, Linda Smart, Larry Soberman, Brianna Stiller, Maria Thomas, Peter Tromba, Juan Carlos Valle, Jane Waite, members; Carmen Urbina, Laurie Moses, Tibor Bessko, staff; Korie Rodley, CALC and Amber Colley, Dept of Youth Services intern, guests.

## **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Marshall Peter called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. Those present introduced themselves.

Mr. Peter noted that this would be Michael Corrigan's last meeting as the primary representative from CALC and that CALC Executive Director Korie Rodley would assume that role at future meetings.

Ms. Quinn announced that she would need to leave the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Ms. Joo, Ms. Smart, and Mr. Valle arrived at the meeting at 4:38 p.m.

## **II. Public Comment**

No members of the public asked to speak.

## **III. Board Goals and annual Agenda Review (Dr. Berman)**

Mr. Peter called attention to the "2011-12 4J Board Goals and Annual Agenda" document that was distributed at the meeting and encouraged committee members to review the goals. He described them as impressive and achievable and said that they informed the committee's role and relationship to the district.

Mr. Peter called attention to several goals and key results that he said were especially relevant to the committee's work. He was particularly pleased to see that the gap for African American, Hispanic, Native American, multi-ethnic, special education and economically disadvantaged students achieving the OAKS benchmarks would be cut in half; that the goal relating to professional development reflected the district's commitment to providing the best and most capable teachers for students; that resources were to be targeted to meet the needs of students not experiencing success; and that the district would do a better job of engaging families in their student's learning. Mr. Peter emphasized that by aligning themselves around these goals, the committee members could increase the probability of the district succeeding in meeting these goals.

Superintendent Berman said the district was deeply committed to the board's goals. He pointed out that last year's four-year cohort graduation rate was only 70 percent and he believed that achieving a 100 percent five-year cohort graduation rate for ALL students was eminently achievable. He told the committee that the board had cautioned that commitment to a goal required that it be achievable. Data was being collected now that would allow looking at results diagnostically and some of this data would be shared with the committee in the future.

Ms. Gerot added that the goals aligned with the direction in which the state was moving and provided an opportunity for the district to provide leadership at the state level.

The superintendent emphasized that collaboration of the groups represented at the Equity Committee was critical to achievement of the goals. They were not just goals for the district but for the entire community.

Mr. Valle asked what it meant for a district staff member to be named as the sponsor of a goal. Dr. Berman answered that while everyone was responsible and accountable for the goals, the sponsor was the coordinator who would collect information, monitor progress toward the goal, and ensure that the required work was done.

Responding to additional questions from Mr. Valle about the consequences if a goal was not achieved and the authority of the committee to impact a goal, the superintendent said that by sharing progress toward the goals with the committee, it would be possible to identify where the district was succeeding and where it was having problems. The board was ultimately responsible for achieving its goals and it was his job to ensure that the district carried out the board's directives. It was important to approach problems diagnostically and to be open to finding new solutions and different structures.

It gave Ms. Joo a sense of security to know that individuals were responsible for keeping tabs on progress toward the goals. She said that committee members needed to consider their roles in bringing the goals to reality. Ms. Joo stressed that kids needed more adult attention and that community members needed to be inspired to help fill in the gaps in the education system.

Mr. Martinez added that the entire community needed to work together toward solutions. He appreciated the district's willingness to identify, diagnose, and address its problems which required a willingness to risk failure.

Ms. Waite applauded the goals and the focus on a diagnostic approach. She observed that student and family feedback were missing in a draft version of the new teacher evaluation tool and that absence seemed incongruent with these goals. The superintendent assured her that he had slowed the process for completing the evaluation tool because he did not want a simplistic answer and that he was dissatisfied with the Charlotte Danielson framework. The version Ms. Waite referred to was far from being a finished document.

Ms. Thomas agreed with Ms. Waite that ongoing feedback from students and parents was a critical component of the teacher evaluation process.

#### **IV. Review of the Equity Committee Survey Results**

At 5:13 p.m., the committee divided into small groups of three to review and discuss the survey. Ms. Urbina asked the groups to consider what the survey confirmed, what surprised them, and what stood out as the main finding. They would then report back to each other in an effort to determine next steps in moving the committee forward in the context of the board's goals.

Ms. Quinn left the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Beginning at 5:56 p.m., the groups reported back on their discussions. Several similar themes emerged from the six groups and are highlighted below.

- Equity Committee members preferred not having term limits.
- There was no clear message about the selection process and composition of the committee.
- Equity Committee members believed they had the capacity to do more.
- The committee both identified problems and worked toward solutions. Committee members placed greater importance on their monitoring role than did district administration
- Many in the district were unclear about the impact and effectiveness of the committee, yet they recognized the initiatives and activities for which the committee was responsible, particularly the bullying and harassment survey work.
- A collaborative dynamic existed with the organizations represented on the committee. Both groups valued that collaboration and the district wanted that collaborative relationship strengthened.
- The district wanted the committee to have a stronger role in legislative advocacy.
- Socio-economic status seemed more important to the district than to the Equity Committee.
- Professional development was valued by both survey groups.

- There was consensus that the 4J Board should be represented on the Equity Committee.
- The Equity Committee considered lack of follow through and accountability a problem.
- Achieving the 100% graduation goal required parental involvement. Without more resources at its disposal, how could the committee engage the community?
- Communication was key to any effort to effect change. The committee needed to articulate what it did and its impacts, possibly through some tool such as a newsletter.

## **V. Next Steps**

Superintendent Berman thanked committee members for their thoughtful review of the surveys and said that he appreciated the opportunity to listen, get some honest feedback, and begin to piece together the puzzle of what it means to take the work to the next level.

Dr. Berman said that acting in a monitoring role could be part of a diagnostic effort rather than a judgmental activity. He wanted to focus on building bridges both within the district and between the district and the community in the work of advancing the board's goals. The challenge was in defining that collaboration. He asked committee members to consider whether their job was to advocate for their individual groups or to share their wisdom in order to advance the work.

In tracing the history of the committee, Dr. Berman had found that bylaws created in 1998 had not been followed and that some groups that were to be represented on the committee no longer existed. He was interested in proposals for moving forward to be more effective. He said that there had been some contentious issues over the past five months and that the group had operated in a positive manner. He was honored to work with members of the committee and looked forward to moving forward.

Mr. Carrigan left the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

Mr. Peter summarized by saying that he hoped to see the committee find ways to reach out to mobilize the community in achieving the board's goals.

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.