



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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**TO: Members, Board of Education
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent**

FROM: District 97 Policy Review Team

RE: Equity Policy

DATE: December 19, 2017

On Tuesday, September 12, 2017, the Board of Education received an update from the district's policy review team (Keecia Broy, Bob Spatz and Chris Jasculca) about the status of the equity policy being drafted by the team and the administration. At that time, we informed the board that Superintendent Kelley had created a draft that was meant to align with and support the district's vision. We also informed the board that Dr. Carrie Kamm, the district's senior director of equity, had requested time to review the draft, compare it to similar policies created by other cities/communities (Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis, Roanoke, Madison, Beaverton and Highline) and determine the next steps in the process.

Below is a summary of the work on the equity policy that Dr. Kamm and our team completed during the past three months. A draft of that policy is attached for board's review and discussion this evening. Given the important role this policy will play in advancing the district's vision, and our desire to provide the board and community with ample time and opportunity to offer feedback on the draft, our team and the administration is recommending that the policy be brought back for an additional review/discussion on Tuesday, January 9, and the vote to adopt/approve it be scheduled for Tuesday, January 23. With that said, we understand the adoption/approval of the policy may need to be delayed beyond January 23 if the draft requires substantive changes.

Executive Summary – Creation of the Draft Equity Policy

As stated above, Dr. Kamm used the draft equity policy created by Superintendent Kelley as a starting point for her work on this important endeavor. She began by identifying the ways in which having a policy would help enhance the work we are doing around equity. Those ways include, but are not limited to:

- Reducing the impact of implicit bias
- Enabling the implementation of equity interventions
- Reducing the use of discriminatory practices

She considered the factors that would potentially impact/influence the design and implementation of an equity policy and corresponding procedures. Those factors include, but are not limited to:

- Community demographic trends
- Equity concerns raised by the community
- Existing references to equity and inclusion in our current plans and strategies
- The scope of the vision captured in strategic objectives and initiatives
- The resources necessary to implement the plan
- Performance measures that capture the impact on students, especially those who are most school-dependent and risk being marginalized

- The data necessary to benchmark progress

She also considered what makes a policy ineffective. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Enacting policies that nobody knows about
- Enacting policies that do not change practice
- Enacting policies without accountability for implementation

In her review of the equity policies produced by the cities/communities cited above, Dr. Kamm identified several common elements in the documents, which included:

- Vision
- Purpose
- Beliefs
- Actions, action steps and/or opportunities
- Measurements
- Definitions of terms and phrases

The revised draft she produced has many of the same or similar elements (Vision, Purpose, Opportunities, Outcomes and Definitions).

Our team reviewed/discussed the draft equity policy on Thursday, November 9 and Thursday, December 7, and provided several recommended revisions. Those revisions included the following:

Vision Section

- Change predicated to predicted in the final sentence of the second paragraph.
- Add IEP status and EL status to race, gender and socioeconomic status in the final sentence of the second paragraph.

Opportunities Section

- Change the second paragraph to read – The Board of Education is committed to examining disaggregated academic attainment, growth, discipline, and other data in order to identify disparities and to develop strategies to ensure that all students can reach their potential in an environment free of discrimination and institutional bias, especially in relation to racism.
- Remove the phrase “furthest from opportunity” in the last bullet so it reads “students who need more support.”

Outcomes Section

- Remove references to the achievement gap and the 70 percent target so the focus is kept on helping all students achieve, excellence targets, targeted universalism, etc.
- Revise the second bullet to read – To ensure that students performing below grade level accelerate learning to grade level or at least 1.5 years of growth.

Definitions Section

- Add definitions for discrimination, institutional bias and racism.
- Change subgroups to demographic groups.
- Add footnotes citing the source of the definitions.

Once the policy has been adopted/approved by the board, the administration is recommending that the district form an Excellence Through Equity Committee that consists of students, teachers, community members, administrators and board members. This administrative committee would be charged with developing action

plans and procedures that are aligned with and help support the implementation of the equity policy. There was some discussion about having this group help draft the policy. However, both our team and the administration are advising against this because if we were to follow plans similar to those of communities such as Shaker Heights in Ohio, the process of developing the policy could take up to two years to complete.

The tentative plan is to issue a call for committee members in February and schedule the first meeting in April. However, this plan could change depending on the time it takes to finish the policy.