

**Equity Committee Meeting
Eugene Public Schools District 4J
200 N. Monroe**

October 25, 2018
4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: David Abramowitz, Betsy Boyd, Gary Campbell, Bao Green, Julie Heffernan, Nicholas Kaasa, Ingrid Koch; Gustavo Balderas, Karen Pérez, Cheryl Linder, Charis McGaughy.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Pérez called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. Everyone introduced themselves along with a quote that resonated with them.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Abramowitz asked about the status of the Educational Equity Policy Proposal as noted in the previous minutes.

Mr. Balderas said they do not currently have an Equity Policy in 4J.

Mr. Abramowitz clarified that his desire for a conversation about a policy was in relation to special education.

Ms. Pérez shared there were three areas of focus for the district: Tier 1 Instruction, Behavior Framework, and High School Success. She stated that the conversation about equity and special education could be folded into the Tier 1 Instruction focus area, which is about meeting the educational needs for all students in the classroom.

Mr. Abramowitz said he was interested in community-based instruction rather than simulation-based instruction. He added that there were some things that happened in general education that were not useful for all kids, and he thought it was a deeper conversation they could have.

Ms. Pérez announced the minutes were approved.

III. Review of Purpose & Develop Community Agreements

Ms. Pérez reviewed the Committee's Purpose and Community Agreements. She stated that the purpose of the committee was to provide the district guidance on creating the conditions for every student to reach educational excellence with equitable access and outcomes. She expressed that she wanted to start using the equity lens tool during committee meetings.

Ms. Pérez reviewed the operation pieces from last year, including: start and end on time, respect the agenda, have clear meeting objectives and action items, be aware of confidentiality, and have multiple ways to provide feedback.

Ms. Pérez reviewed the relational pieces from last year, including: community voice first, hear multiple perspectives, be fully present, strive for clarity as you speak, and discomfort is ok.

Mr. Balderas expressed that he would like to do a deeper dive in terms of access. He said he would like to use the committee as thought partners who would help guide the work. He noted that access was very broad and included access to the International High School as well as the Choice Program in schools. Mr. Balderas stated he would also like the committee to be able to look at data at meetings.

Mr. Abramowitz agreed that access was a broad question and said he felt access to programs that are actually meaningful is the most important component of access. He added that he wanted to be able explore where programs they talked about have ended up.

Mr. Campbell said he found looking at data in work groups was a meaningful use of volunteer time as well as helpful to staff who may not have time to break down some of the data. He said he thought it would be helpful to go into the schools and see how the programs were working as well as have conversations directly with students rather than hearing from district employees.

Ms. Linder arrived at 5:01.

Ms. Green said as a parent she liked to see that the programs they discussed were currently happening in the schools and implemented in real time. She thought that some programs the committee talked about could start right away.

Mr. Balderas noted that education systems were very broad and sometimes the district did not keep the community apprised because they were moving so quickly and implementing a lot at once. He wondered if they could get students to speak to their experience in the programs as a way to highlight what was being implemented.

Ms. Green shared a story about her son's experience in which she could not find resources even after advocating for him and switching schools. She reiterated that she wanted to see more implemented in real time.

Ms. Heffernan arrived at 5:11.

Ms. Pérez replied that it sounded like they needed to think about how to be more flexible and adjust to particular student needs.

Mr. Koch said she liked the idea of breaking into work groups. She said it would be helpful to have a big picture look at what the district looked like because as a parent she only had the perspective of her child's school. As a community member, she sometimes felt it was difficult to understand some of the acronyms used during the committee meetings.

Ms. Boyd said she liked the fact that the committee was comprised of both community members and practitioners. She noted that she liked the problem of practice approach they used last year as

well as the verbiage of access outcomes rather than access options because it conveyed more urgency. She said she liked that this group was an advisory group and appreciated that people made time for it.

Mr. Heffernan said she was thinking about the question of safety. She shared that she has monthly meeting of elementary school parents with transgender kids who had questions about safety and professional training.

IV. Introduction of the Topic

Ms. Pérez began by talking some things she was working on this year. She stated that the district had a 2020 vision with the following goals: educational excellence with equitable access and outcomes for every student, multiple pathways to student success, communication in connection with community, diverse world-class work force, and sustainable stewardship.

Ms. Pérez used the first goal as an example and noted that one objective was around culturally responsive instruction. She stated that to meet this objective, she was leading teacher trainings and professional learning communities where people came together specifically around anti-bias training and culturally responsive teaching. She added that she worked specifically with teachers who teach other teachers.

Ms. Pérez shared that they had a professional development calendar this year that was used to ensure that each student was getting what the state requires. She noted that in previous years, some students were getting less education depending on their schools' start and end dates.

Ms. Pérez explained that the state of Oregon had a new Tribal History Shared History requirement that came out in fourth grade, eighth grade, and tenth grade. She added that in addition to getting teachers trained, she intended to imbed lessons about tribal history in other grade levels. She noted that the state now also required Ethnic Studies training requirements. In addition to training social studies teachers, she noted that school counselors would undergo training that included a focus on normalizing gender and supporting undocumented students.

Ms. Pérez said she would also be teaming up with administrators to do deeper dives around particular subject areas that all students need to be successful at (such as Algebra 1). She noted that they looked at data about how well students from different races and ethnicities were doing in Algebra 1 and were using it to make a plan to support all students.

Ms. Pérez let the committee know about a grant from the Oregon Department of Education called the Black and African Student Success Grant. She shared that they were working with Lane ESD (Lane Education Service District) and the NAACP as well as each Eugene high school to look at data. She clarified that their data was inaccurate because some white students had been listed as multi-racial if they did not provide their race when they enrolled in school.

Ms. Pérez said they were also looking at student voice and had town hall symposiums where students of color could come into a space to learn about the systemic ways that their education

experience was affected by racism. She stated she was working to bring students together at student-led, mini-summits with two pilot projects at North Eugene High School and Churchill High School focusing on health and safety. In a survey, students at these school shared that the health and safety topics they wanted to discuss were: suicide, bullying and harassment, and marijuana. The students developed a work plan for this year and expressed that they wanted to help train teachers to disrupt micro-aggressions in real time.

Ms. Pérez noted that they were also working on interpretation and translation. She shared that they now had a select-your-language option on the district website, access to interpretation services, and an event for families of mixed-immigration status to help them understand their rights.

Ms. Pérez introduced the topic of Community Equity Forums and said the first forum on the topic of the 14th Amendment and Birthright Citizenship occurred last month. She clarified that the forums came out of conversations she had with people in the school community who felt excluded and added that community agencies and elders would be taking the lead on developing the content of the forums.

Ms. Pérez stated that the forums occurred on the first Thursday of every month, so the conversation could continue the following night at Communities of Color and Allies Network events.

Ms. Koch asked who was creating the upcoming forum.

Ms. Pérez said they have asked for elders in the community to help plan and lead the Native American forum.

Ms. Pérez shared that she talked with the Pacific Islander group and they wanted to host a forum in May. She added that she was thinking about doing a meeting about access and special education in April and a forum on normalizing gender in January.

Ms. Pérez asked the committee to brainstorm additional forum topics.

Mr. Campbell asked if they could send announcements about upcoming forums to the committee members.

Ms. Pérez said they would.

Ms. Koch shared that she would like to see a discussion about houseless communities.

Ms. Pérez said they have 900 students who are houseless in 4J.

Mr. Abramowitz said he would like for students with disabilities see more examples of people like themselves out in the world. He added that he would like to see a panel of graduates who could talk about what parts of their 4J experience they most enjoyed, what community agencies

supported them after graduation, and what programs provided support for them while they were in school.

Ms. Campbell said he would like to see a forum that brought families together that supported foster youth—a combination of young people, parents, and professionals. He also suggested a forum on recent immigrants to talk about how easy it is to navigate the current system. He stated that he thought they could also host a year-end forum comprised of graduates who are first-generation college students.

Ms. Boyd added that she also thought a forum about foster care would be useful and suggested they include recent graduates instead of students currently in the system.

Ms. Koch suggested they have a forum about support for parents of marginalized communities where they could share their experience and advice in a collaborative conversation. She highlighted that she thought it was important to have follow-up requirements for these forums because they were covering such heavy and important topics.

Ms. Pérez agreed and said they intentionally planned to hold forums on the first Thursday of each month, so if people wanted to talk more, they could attend the Communities of Color and Allies Network First Friday event the following night.

Ms. Heffernan wondered if the intent of forums were to inform the district or to inform the people who were in attendance. She stated that it was important to be explicit about the goal of the forums.

Ms. Pérez said the purpose was the share history and stories to better understand each other and stemmed from conversations about people feeling excluded in the community.

Ms. Heffernan asked if principals and teachers would be attending the forums.

Ms. Pérez responded that they were invited, but not required to attend. She added that people who had talked with her about feeling marginalized were not just feeling this way in schools, but in the larger community as well. She added that she had considered taping the forums, so teachers could show them in their classrooms.

Ms. Heffernan cautioned that there had been a history of listening sessions that were not used in this community.

Ms. Koch said it was important to clarify if it was an event for the community or a listening session for 4J. She suggested noting that these events were a collaboration with a community group and 4J because it would foster more trust. She said there was a degree of emotional fatigue with institutions in the community and felt like people needed to see more measurable outcomes.

Ms. Pérez noted that there were histories of this community that she wanted students to know about and saw these forums as an opportunity to share those histories.

Mr. Kaas shared that agencies assisting students in special education when they graduate emphasized people first language, which means that language should reflect that a person was first and the disability was second. He added that this was a big push in Lane County Disability Services and he had created a power point about it.

Ms. Pérez expressed that she would be interested in having Mr. Kaas present at a forum.

Ms. Heffernan said people had been asking for training around anxiety and self-harm. She added that another issue that came up was Black and Asian invisibility in undocumented conversations. She noted that gender diversity was another issue people were talking about.

Ms. Pérez stated that they could set up some trainings for teachers, but if it was a conversation that parents wanted to have, they could do a forum as well.

Ms. Heffernan replied that both communities were naming those issues.

Ms. Koch said her children's school was hosting a training around suicide prevention and self-harm.

Ms. Linder said that Roger Brubaker from Lane County was hosting a forum next week. She added that they just hosted a training with the help of Mr. Brubaker about a recognized way to work with kids who are experiencing pre-suicidal feelings and anxiety.

Ms. Pérez noted that they had started a group last year in the district to address these issues.

Ms. Heffernan said that there were particular communities disproportionately experiencing suicidal thoughts and self-harm that had not been discussed. She highlighted that there was an intersectionality of race in the issue of self-harm.

Ms. Pérez shared that they did a training specifically for the Latino community and had another one planned on November 14.

Ms. Linder added that there was a training in January on post-vention. They began with a post training because of the number of successful suicide attempts last year. She added that Mr. Brubaker was working with them on trainings as well as tracking data for the entire county.

Ms. Heffernan said that if the community members were informing the district, they would expect the district to do something with that information. She said both inward-facing and outward-facing events were needed, but it was important to name what type of event it was.

Ms. Pérez clarified she believed the intention of the forum was to provide information to teachers and community members about how history has impacted what students are experiencing in the classroom today.

Ms. Abramowitz suggested the description include what audience members could expect from the event.

Ms. Pérez stated that she would like the forums to be dialogue, not just sitting and listening. She let the committee members know they were welcome to participate in a forum if they were an expert in that area.

Ms. Koch shared that she participated in a parenting forum with other marginalized community members where they did not follow up with people in attendance. She highlighted that it was important for them to figure out how they would follow up with people.

V. Introduce & Implement Protocol

VI. Reflection on Community Agreements

VII. Updates

Mr. Gustavo said they were ten weeks into the school year and every department was working hard to implement the 2020 Strategic Plan. He added that the plan was important because they would be able to use it as an evaluation tool. Mr. Gustavo noted they were also working to develop protocols to ensure they do not lose students and change the mindset and culture, which was challenging. He said that change happened one hire at a time as well as with new initiatives such as the professional development calendar and set standard instructional minutes for students. He expressed that he wanted to continue to share more about the work that the district is doing with the committee.

Ms. Pérez said she would send around some dates to the committee that they could do walk throughs in the schools.

VIII. Public Comment

There was no one wishing to speak.

Ms. Pérez adjourned at 6:28 p.m. The next meeting is November 6, 2018.

Recorded by Erin Hagen