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

September 14, 2017
4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Betsy Boyd, Gary Campbell, Julie Heffernan, Thomas Anil Oomen, Crystal Persi, Surendra Subramani, members; Alicia Hays, ex officio members; Gustavo Balderas, Jeffry Johnson, Cheryl Linder, Oscar Loureiro, Charis McGaughy, Karen Pérez-Da Silva, Leila Schuck, Cydney Vandercar, Brooke Wagner, staff.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Pérez-Da Silva called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. She asked everyone present to introduce themselves, which they then did.

Ms. Boyd entered the meeting at 4:44 p.m.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

Ms. Pérez-Da Silva announced that there was not a quorum present, and she suggested the Equity Committee vote to approve the May 11, 2017 minutes at their October meeting.

III. Review of Purpose & Develop Community Agreements

Ms. Pérez-Da Silva asked the Equity Committee what Community Operational and Relational Agreements they would like to see. The Equity Committee then broke into groups to discuss.

Ms. Boyd said the group of which she was a member, came up with the following:

- Starting on time
- Clarity surrounding public comment

Ms. Persi said the group of which she was a member, came up with the following:

- Be respectful of the Agenda, including time allotments for each item
- Getting meeting materials ahead of time
- Soliciting all voices in the room

Mr. Campbell entered the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Ms. Heffernan offered that the operational/relational binary itself was an issue of equity, as operational systems could prevent certain groups from joining the conversation. She suggested community members be given priority to speak.

Ms. Wagner said the group of which she was a member, came up with the following:

- Multiple avenues for feedback

Ms. Persi suggested being fully present at meetings was important.

Mr. Oomen said the EC should foster an atmosphere of non-judgment.

Ms. Pérez-Da Silva suggested the EC cut down on sarcasm and sarcastic "joking."

Mr. Campbell offered the Agendas need to have clear action items.

IV. Introduction of Our Problem of Practice

Ms. McGaughy and Mr. Loureiro offered the Equity Committee an introduction on the Equity Committee's problem surrounding community response and involvement.

Ms. Heffernan asked if the North region was the only region in which this type of data collection was being done, and if so, were all regions of the District eventually going to be participating in this or a similar program.

Mr. Loureiro responded that both of those sentiments were true.

Ms. Boyd wondered if there was a response target that staff had in mind to achieve proper representation.

Mr. Loureiro said that ideally, that number would be 20%

Mr. Oomen asked how participants were reached out to.

Mr. Loureiro replied there was both electronic and paper versions of the survey.

Mr. Campbell wondered if there was an opportunity to incentivize survey responses.

Mr. Loureiro said that there was a raffle held at the end of the surveying process.

V. Introduce & Implement Protocol

Mr. Campbell asked if it was possible the company handling the survey could over-represent usually underrepresented groups.

Mr. Loureiro said it was.

Mr. Oomen asked what the Equity Committee knew of ways to reach out to underrepresented groups that would be helpful in the future.

Ms. McGaughy said this fall, staff would be conducting listening sessions.

Ms. Persi wondered if there was any evaluation of the survey's difficulty level. She said that some of the survey's verbiage seems geared toward respondents with college degrees.

Mr. Loureiro said changes were made to the survey to enhance readability.

Mr. Campbell offered incentivized phone surveys would be a good idea.

Ms. Heffernan suggested going directly to the schools with the highest number of students who fall into an underrepresented group to administer the survey.

Mr. Subramani entered the meeting at 5:39 p.m.

Mr. Subramani said that historically speaking, initiatives such as this were totally void of follow-up. He urged the Equity Committee and staff to do what was necessary to gain back the trust of the community. He suggested a social function to break the ice with the community.

Ms. Boyd reminded the Committee that the survey is not the only tool the District has it its disposal for community outreach.

Ms. Persi suggested a good route to answers and information was through the teachers and counselors.

Ms. Heffernan suggested the advent of focus groups; she also suggested meeting sites which are not government sites.

Ms. Boyd suggested that the District's four high schools were too many considering the area's population.

VI. Close Protocol Identifying Next Steps

Ms. Linder said the District has other ways of interfacing with the survey questions.

Ms. Vandercar suggested meeting people where they are as opposed to having them come to you.

Mr. Subramani asked what strategies were being employed to bring people together in Springfield.

Ms. Heffernan opined that the events themselves should be the incentive, instead of offering rewards for showing up.

Ms. Persi asked that managing phone-in data be added to the list of Community Agreements.

Ms. Wagner suggested adding Confidentiality to the list.

VII. Reflection on Community Agreements

Superintendent Balderas said he was confident with 4J staff's handling of the Community Agreements. He reminded the Equity Committee that the survey was never meant as an end-all be-all, but rather a guide to conversation. Mr. Balderas announced that North Eugene High School had the most students above projection of the four comprehensive schools in the district. He said that a recent Register Guard piece was perpetuating a false narrative and wondered how 4J could tell its own story.

VIII. Public Comment

There were no members of the public at the meeting who wished to comment.

Mr. Subramani asked for clarification on why the public comment agenda item had been moved to the end of the agenda.

Ms. Pérez-Da Silva replied that public comment given at the end of the meeting was easier for the Equity Committee from an information processing standpoint, as staff could follow up quickly with any members of the public who wished it. She also offered that it was easier for members of the public as well, as they could just come to the end of the meeting to share their comments, instead of having to sit through the entire meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

(Recorded by Rodney Cimburke)