Equity Committee Meeting
Eugene Public Schools District 4J
Virtually, Zoom Meeting

December 10th, 2020
4:30 pm

PRESENT: Eric Richardson, Ann Cole, Betsy Boyd, Gary Campbell, Maya Rabasa, Laura Dahill, members; Anne Marie Levis, Judy Newman, school board; Cydney Vandercar, Charis McGaughy, Andy Dey, KC Clark, Kerry Delf, Leila Schuck, Lily Gold, Maria Covernali, Oscar Loureiro, David Jacobson, staff.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. McGaughy called the meeting to order at 4:30 and announced that she would be facilitating the meeting for December while Mr. Flores Gutierrez was out. She then asked each person to introduce themselves as she called names.

Ms. Maria Covernali then began a short centering activity that focused on mindful breathing. Ms. McGaughy then talked about the items on the agenda and went over the sequence of events that would be happening at this meeting.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

Ms. McGaughy asked for a review of the meeting minutes.

The first set was from the January 9, 2019 Equity Committee meeting. Ms. Dahill moved to accept the minutes and Ms. Rabasa seconded. The minutes were passed unanimously.

The second set was for October 8th, 2020. Ms. Boyd moved to approve the minutes with one correction and Mr. Campbell seconded. They were passed unanimously.

The third set of minutes was for November 12, 2020. Mr. Richardson moved to approve, and Mr. Campbell seconded. They were passed unanimously.

III. Closing and Updates

The meeting was then moved to closing and updates. Mr. Campbell asked if verbal public comment would be coming back to the meeting format.

Ms. Rabasa then asked about who responds to emails that are sent to the committee.

Ms. McGaughy said that Mr. Flores Gutierrez responds to the emails and that verbal public comment could be added back to meeting. Ms. McGaughy stated this would be worked on to include at the next meeting.

She then spoke about the job listing on student engagement and how to get it more widely distributed because the last posting did not yield qualified candidates.

Ms. Dahill spoke about being excited about such an important role being filled in the district.

Ms. McGaughy then turned the meeting over to Ms. Newman.

IV. Update on School Safety Review

Ms. Newman then spoke about the work session that would be happening that Wednesday, which would be helping to hire a facilitator and narrowing down 2021 plans.

Ms. Rabasa then spoke about preparing for hybrid instruction and the EPD contract ending, and how they are hoping to address that.

Ms. Levis shared that there has been no active SRO contract since the summer and they will continue to work on an alternative.

They then discussed the issue of renaming the student safety group.

Ms. Newman then excused herself from the meeting.

Mr. Dey spoke about community resources that the school district is looking to partner with.

Ms. Rabasa commented on her hopes in trauma informed care and Cahoots. Ms. Rabasa suggested that the district reach out to Twin Rivers Charter School, because Cahoots has been in their building for a while.

V. English Language Development: Problem of Practice Protocol

Ms. McGaughy did an overview of the protocol and asked everyone to take a moment and think about their lens for the conversation.

Mr. Richardson then spoke about the importance of students with different ethnicities being able to explore their own experiences through their own language.

Ms. McGaughy then turned it over for a presentation by Lily Gold, the ELD Program Coordinator in 4J.

Lily provided a brief background on her teaching experience, sharing that her first instruction job was in a population that was 80% English Language Learners.

She spoke about the “touch tree” metaphor, that if you are lost in the woods you need a safe space that is your home base. She posed the question on how instructors can be “touch trees” to students and families. Her biggest goal is figuring out how to best teach English Language to the 500 students that are in English language development in 4J. On top of that, they also monitor students for 3 years after they complete their ELPA test.

She then spoke about how 91% of high schoolers in ELD are passing, however middle school numbers are dwindling and how they can handle this discrepancy. She closed up by saying that systematic ELD is going to be the next big undertaking for 4J, and how they will be providing chromebooks to students and creating action plans and work groups to begin developing this. She also spoke about getting school paperwork out in the family's native languages has also been huge. She would love to build more relationships around the school district, and 4J is also leading the state in bi-literacy.

Ms. Gold then spoke about the importance of getting students and families representation of their heritage within schools and the dual immersion program; a big goal is for these students to be able to keep their native heritage and not lose it through English Language Learning.

Revamping the newcomer process is another item that is being looked at, wanting to ensure young students have a successful time assimilating into the district.

Ms. Gold’s presentation concluded and Ms. McGaughy then turned the meeting over to the committee to begin discussing.

Mr. Richardson then spoke first about the importance of bi-literacy, and how this is so important to keep students equitable and supported through their native cultures.

Ms. Campbell said he was interested in learning more about how to keep families supported as well during assimilation.

Ms. Dahill spoke about the support for elementary ELD teachers and wondered if this was also available for secondary ELD teachers as well. She also wondered about TAG student support.

She also then spoke about how impressed she was with the graduation increase, and how that could be attributed to different learning milestones.

Mr. Dey then said he had had some conversations about the partnership with Juntos to help support parents and families through this process, especially post secondary access.

Ms. Rabasa spoke about the issue of the increase in failing grades and advocated again about teachers looking at different ways to structure grades after the data comes out for this first trimester. She then spoke about giving students one credit in computer technology for having to learn online learning so much this year and how it would be a good boost and motivator.

Ms. Dahill then spoke about the academic leniency that is happening at colleges as well.

The conversation then wrapped up and the next meeting in January was discussed, which would be held on the 8th. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.