

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

April 8th, 2021  
4:30 pm

**PRESENT:** Ann Cole, Betsy Boyd, Gary Campbell, Maya Rabasa, Eric Richardson, T. Anil Oommen, Members; Anne Marie Levis, Board Member; Cydney Vandercar, Misael Flores Gutierrez, Charis McGaughy, Jeff Johnson, David Jacobson, Karen Hardin, KC Clark, Leila Schuck, Oscar Loureiro, Angi Meyer, Sheri Hoyland, Kari Skinner, staff; Pooja Bhatt, Aimee Craig, Monica Cox, guests.

**I. Welcome and Centering Activity**

Mr. Flores Gutierrez called the meeting to order at 4:30 and called roll and asked each member to introduce themselves.

**II. Review of Minutes**

Mr. Flores Gutierrez then reviewed the minutes and asked if there were any corrections. There were none. The minutes were passed.

**III. All Students Belong Update**

Ms. Levis then began her update. Ms. Newman was unable to attend this meeting. Ms. Levis continued that they had started a safety initiative. SeeChange was the consulting firm the board had selected to work with on this initiative. Ms. Levis said they saw the Equity Committee playing a big part in focusing on the data work and outreach that the All Students Belong initiative will be doing.

Representatives from SeeChange introduced themselves and told the group about themselves. They began to give the committee a high-level overview of the proposal they put together. Their hope was to start a group within the community that would help take action within different institutions, one of the ways that they do this is to empower the community with the information that they need to assess different problems and solutions with a focus on racial equity in their work. If they want to address the racial inequity in schools, they believe they must address race itself first and foremost. The first goal is to do a literature research period and administrative data review. They will also be talking to students, teachers and administrators in focus groups to engage them.

They then went through guiding questions that helped to frame their work and guide their analysis. They encompass how schools ensure and respond to student safety and what more can a district do to further promote student safety.

Mr. Campbell asked if there was any conversation about including parent and guardian contributions to these scoping conversations.

SeeChange will be speaking with students first and then filling in gaps farther into the research period.

They then opened the discussion for committee members to express any concerns or ask any questions. These concerns focused around how to not exploit trauma when asking students about their experiences and making sure all groups in terms of race and background are represented.

Ms. Levis then wrapped up this discussion by outlining that she feels good about SeeChange and their ability to really understand this community specifically.

Ms. McGaughy then updated that SeeChange will be joining the next few meetings as well.

#### **IV. Suicide Awareness and Prevention**

Angi Meyer is a Suicide Awareness and Prevention Specialist with the district. She began a presentation on a draft policy for this issue. She began with a shared vision that this issue is not only a school issue but an entire community issue. The idea is to look at how schools can play a larger part in awareness and prevention that helps the entire community. Prevention hinges on positive messaging and social-emotional restorative practices, benchmarking, behavior regulation, and personal safety and sexual abuse avoidance. Risk screening and intervention as well as partnerships with community support are also big pieces to the prevention puzzle. How to prevent cluster suicides from occurring as an after response is also discussed. She then told the story of Abby, a transgender student who died by suicide. Her parents then looked at possible signs that they may have missed and found that there were signs within her schoolwork that could have been caught. Abby's Act was then made, that all schools have processes and procedures have policies in place that involve suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. She also outlined that there should be protocols that help point different issues to the correct resource. She then outlined their work on screening devices and training, to flag internet usage that contains things that indicate harm towards themselves or others. Reentry plans after an attempted suicide have also been started, as well as administrative resources. The collaboration with Bethel, Springfield, and Eugene mental health institutions has also been extremely helpful.

She then moved on to outlining the barriers that this work has. The first one is the extensive reach that this work needs to take, and how many things this could change. The other challenge here is time, time to train and implement these policies and procedures.

Ms. Rabasa said she was thankful for the language that Ms. Meyer used for this subject and asked about the translation services that will be provided for this. Ms. Meyer answered that these resources are still being fleshed out and she will follow up on these resources.

She then spoke about the issue of educating kids to not think about this as “snitching” but to get help for your friend; the two main goals here being education about what to watch for and how to report.

## **V. Public Comment**

Mr. Flores Gutierrez then moved the discussion onto public comment.

Mary Malcom spoke first. She spoke about the majority of literature taught in schools being white male authored and her concern that students these days are still only reading and consuming literature that does not relate to students these days or account for equity in schools.

The next speaker was Michelle Shu, a 4J parent and librarian. She echoed the concerns of literature in schools, and specifically on the material by Kendrick Lamar being removed from curriculum and student artwork being removed as well that brings the question of censorship to the table.

Eric Richardson then spoke up about how serious of an issue this was to right historical wrongs. He spoke about Kendrick Lamar being one small piece of a pantheon of black excellence that could be utilized.

## **VI. Closing & Updates**

Committee members spoke about their thankfulness for the conversations on this issue and the issues of suicide awareness and prevention.

Mr. Flores Gutierrez then wrapped up the conversation and closed the meeting. The next Equity Committee meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2021.

*(Minutes recorded by Alex Sullivan)*