

MINUTES

1. Call to Order by Evelyn Meeks

2. Roll call

Evelyn Meeks, Sue Berogan Jill Berogan, Megan Hembrough, Courtney Korasick, Elana Schelling-Tufte, Andrea Sweet, Jenny Cleveland, ...McRoy, Brad Sweet, Kyra Newnan, Nick Stange, Kim Brandt, Jason Blume Terrell Yarbrough, Jerry Harris, Kris Arduino

3. Approval of Agenda

1st Elana 2nd Nick

All aye

4. Approval of Committee minutes: April 8, 2021

Motion to Approve Minutes of April 8, 2021

1st S. Berogan 2nd J. Berogan

All Aye. Motion carried

5. Comments from the Community - none

6. Discussion items: Purpose and Goals of the Committee

Dr. Yarbrough noted that we need to determine from the Committee what our purpose and goals are going to be.

Elana noted she has been on the Equity team since it started as one of the first teachers and went to San Antonio to be trained. Her thought for the Committee is that we are doing a lot of great work at the school level and this year big improvements are being made. What we are doing is really important at that level unless we are talking about pushing out into the community. We meet regular for equity work in the schools and committees will be coming back at a district level when Covid is gone. We have people that have spoken to 6th grade students and staff and we are doing this work. What is the purpose of this committee unless we are doing something outside pushing into the community which is a very uncomfortable and an emotional subject.

Jill noted she believes the committee is very important and after hearing students and parents speak the committee is much needed. We have a long way to go. To dismantle would be tragic for students. I met with Nick and Dr. Yarbrough and we thought maybe it should be more of a student-led committee.

Megan asked what would the goal be for students leading it. Jill noted we would be a part of it but we would hear what they have to say and their perspective. So to tie everything together with the school committees and students would be good.

Terrell asked if it would more of an advisory committee and that committee would share out to the Board regarding equity. Jill noted it could be but we have to have the discussions and back and forth conversations. Everybody needs to be on the same page and we can make it bigger than individual schools and we need to bring the subcommittees together. The Board is not aware of all things but this is part of what we wanted the committee as the Board wants to be a part of the change in the district.

He asked if the students are involved would students speak at Board meetings. From an elementary perspective it is a thought to protect them and we have witnessed the misinformation and videos coming out in the community and we need to protect them. Jill noted that we would ideally like to go out to the community, but it is not the best time for that. Our job is to protect the students. We haven't discussed having them speak at Board meetings. Jill would be okay with continuing to have student videos and speaking at Board meetings. A 17-year-old is better able to handle things on FB than a 5th grade students. Nick noted that students are at the meetings with us but the burden is on the Board and the committee should be used to push out to the community and fight the misinformation to transition the community into being comfortable.

Students would be safe at this committee meet but the Board would be a different thing.

Elana clarified that it is not the time to take to the community but we always need to take to community. Her internal focus is in her classroom as that is where we can make the most difference. She clarified that she did not mean it was not important.

Brad noted that the work inside the buildings is critical. Younger kids he cannot imagine they would be comfortable. I struggle with the purpose of this committee and those groups and including those kids in this group. I think they would feel more comfortable speaking their truth with their own teacher and class. They need to be interconnected better and high schools are going back to assist in having discussion but other than this committee being reported to he doesn't see anything else. It binds and restricts our actions as you have to have a quorum or you can't do anything. That structure does not exist at the building level but the work gets done.

Jill asked what other groups are going to elementary levels. MSU only visited a sixth grade at Olson Park as Andrea reached out to Kyra as a parent was not satisfied with what was happening and she took it to Marya. It was a very good discussion with the kids and a lot of my students didn't know anything like this existed and there is one at the middle school so they can look forward to that. Issues carry on up to the high school. We did a survey at the end of the discussion with kids and there were some that want to know more about the topic and stayed after and talked to staff. We still have staff members that are not engaged in the work at all and that is still a hurdle we need to embrace before we go further.

Elana noted that she could see after reading the 6th grade surveys they were excited so it would be great to have TEACH come in and talk to 6th grade students as it is at the middle school so they know they have these things they are getting to and then maybe we can bring things to the elementary students so they are a part of it. We have so much more to do within our own schools and it would be easier with children than with the adults to whom they go home to.

Are students are ready to be exposed and I would like to focus on that.

Terrell noted he is hearing that obviously we have been doing equity work for a long time but need to determine how to connect from elementary, middle school, high school and working on staff who are still not engaged and then figure out what we need to push out to the community.

I sent out the letter addressing Critical Race Theory as the community didn't know about this and that this type of thing should continue. I am hearing as a Board and Jill as an individual you want to be included, hear students and be engaged whether it is around policy, discipline, or hiring. Everything we do we put an equity lens on it. Equity needs to be a part of everything we do and who we are and everyone needs to be connected.

Kyra thinks that there is a place for this but the things she struggles with is that the Board all know what is happening and that this committee is offered and it is a place and staff could come and speak about what is happening, but the thing that scares her is the formality of everything and it may turn people away. There is a sense we have been doing that and they want to know why are the Board is coming in and taking over and there is a bit of that fear. She definitely thinks over the last year and year and one-half there have been transitions and Covid and everything that has impacted so some of the E-Teams that were in place are by the wayside and we are holding on tight to get through this Covid year. For her this committee does provide a bit of accountability for both sides, what we are doing in the schools and what the Board is doing. Having a space could be something else other than a formal committee space but the partnership needs to continue or we will not make the progress that we are making. We need to determine who is doing what because based on conversation we all want the same thing but we have to be real and honest on how to collectively get there.

If this is going to continue I would like to see more representation as to what is here. I don't know if this committee is solving that. Andrea said when the MSU kids came to Olson it was very organic and when you have that it is not forced so conversations were more genuine. I like that for that reason.

Jason added that for us as we have been doing the work for a long time and how do we involve the Board. We need to have a Board meeting because we have three members here and we need to have a formal meeting. We are all interested in this work and moving ahead as a District. If we can define our goals and actions as a committee we can be successful. If we have the Board involved we have to continue with this committee and in looking at other districts we could restructure who is actually the committee so we won't have a quorum issue. Here is a committee that meets and engaging, we allow participants, students, e teams and it is not a formal meeting but allows things to occur. How do we catch the Board up to speed. We have to find a way to provide experiences like Beyond Diversity to them as well. In another district they were talking about implicit bias, they provided training and watched a video together. Almost like mini e-team trainings where discussion and dialogue take place and then the goal is to bring items back to the superintendent. This is a more informal approach. We need to unite the work we are doing and the only way to do that with the Board participation so we can do that.

Kim noted when she started coming she had no intention of being on the committee but wanted to know if support staff could be involved. As far as being in E-teams, I only have staff so I came so if I needed to pass something onto support staff I could do that.

So coming to this committee was a way for me to see if I could reach out to support staff. Terrell noted that ultimately that is what we want and the reason why she started coming is to be able to

hear what is going on, interrupt racism. Staff see things that some of us don't see and kids are more relaxed around the custodians than they are around the teachers and so we need to know what is going on so we can have discussions and how to spot racism as one of our mandated trainings.

Jill noted that staff does see things but they are on a different level with you and you can bring that information to the committee to look at.

Equity work is done on SIP Days and support staff is not there. A support staff member sees the things brewing before administrators and teachers.

Megan noted there is a lot of miscommunication and there should be a place where we share what we are doing on our e-teams and come up with ideas like the MSU and collaborate and share and bring back to staff.

Elana noted that a couple of things would it be helpful for our notes from meetings went to Board members, or the agendas. The other question is to think of it more like a training component for anyone that wants it, Board, staff, students, parents. Jason noted we need to think about the voice of community. We can't go to the community without living what we are saying. Jason feels that it is about opportunities to learn and it won't be effective unless we think about what we have learned and where do we go with that, how do we train, how to we give tools to people, how do we have conversations. We want to help the community grow along side of us vs. telling the community. Some of the Board have not been involved in BD or E-teams so there is opportunity for that as well and it becomes more about dialog and growing together and a little less of the official formal feel. We can probably shift the focus to continue to grow together.

Kyra noted that she likes to have some sort of training or discussion topic as part of the issue is the belief if you are or you aren't. The conversation she had today where another employee didn't think they were far enough along to have the conversation but there is no end point and it is a constant for growth and conversation. We need to practice difficult conversations. To have the support to continue the conversations is important. This is not something that has a start date and end date. It is every day and it can be overwhelming but this is it. It is infinite.

Elana noted along those lines if we advertise and get people to come and give them a blurb. You could use those mini 30-minute presentations to teach people. Maybe people would come but we need to be explicit on topics and very organized.

Kim noted that things that are out there in the social world, if I saw a kid doing something like that she needs to know where to send him to another website so that they see both sides so they can make their own judgment.

Sue noted that a lot of this training goes on during SIP Days and Institute Days. Elana noted support staff attend two days out of four SIP Days. Anyone that is not a student but work during the day and not the night shift for custodians.

If we are going to live this everyone needs to be brought to the table. Elana noted it is a contractual issue but would need to pay them. We haven't done Beyond Diversity since Covid which occurs during the summer and over the years we have done specific trainings for staff. We have also done trainings in the auditorium for support staff and we need to determine how to train everyone. Jason noted we have ever changing staff as well.

We need to establish very clearly that this will not change the work we are doing in the buildings. I initially had a bad taste in my mouth when I first attended. The conversations I have had about it it is very important to maintain focus on our kids needs in relation to equity as all kids need different things. The formality of a big meeting gives the impression that mandates are coming down.

Jason noted that we have to start develop goals and action statements. What is the purpose. I believe this work is living it, all of us, E-Teams, this committee that is not the governing body it occurs with all of us individually is doing the work. This is not a group that is leading the work. We are a part of the work as is DELT. We need to make that clear. I do recognize as a Board you have a certain level of power with policy changes and will have the final say on those but the E-Teams will have input into that. I really think that we need to articulate our purpose, goals and action items. We then need to communicate that.

Elana suggested that possibly Terrell could do a blurb about these training meetings or in the newsletter. We are now at 80% opening the newsletters.

Elana noted that may bring some interest to it also. We need goals.

Evelyn noted that once we do what Jason said, Covid did so much damage and it opened up social media which has messed up everyone. If we come up with a plan for the community to see we are here for them that would be better than looking at social media. We need to build back respect and confidence in people. We need to maneuver around Covid and get people to see we are here for them.

1st Elana motioned that we put together a subcommittee to put together the purpose goals, action items for the committee and then bring it back to this group to talk through.

2nd Brad

Terrell noted that there is a piece to share out with district level meetings as well. We need to strengthen this committee so when community members come in we can train them as well on what we have been doing. I learned today that no matter what I share they will always have their viewpoint. As a district we need to say in a united way this is who we are. We are about all of our kids here. Having the message to the building level E-teams is not going to change and having conversations at district level e-teams we are all a part of this work with the Board.

Subcommittee members: Jill, people should email Terrell names before February's meeting as to who wants to be a subcommittee member.

Kim noted that we could get people at the public meeting that are talking about books, sex education and other things and bashing the district and we need to do equity work. We would need to articulate the parameters of the meeting per Jason. Articulate what we are and what we are not.

Motion to adjourn:

1st Megan 2nd Courtney

All aye

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.