

# **Beaverton School District Equity Advisory Committee Report May 2025**

## **Background and Purpose**

Each school district in Oregon is required to establish an educational equity advisory committee (EAC) in accordance with ORS 329.711 and OAR 581-022-2307, following the Oregon Legislature's approval of Senate Bill 732 in 2021. The committee's duties include informing and advising the superintendent and school board about the educational equity impacts of policy decisions, the experiences of underserved student groups, situations that arise in schools that impact underrepresented students, and the larger districtwide climate.

## **Committee Makeup**

By law, the committee must be composed of parents, students, staff and community members, and its membership must be primarily representative of underserved student groups and elevate underrepresented voices. One member of the equity committee must also be a member of the budget committee. Current members of the school board and the superintendent are not eligible for appointment to the committee. Members are selected through an application process, and their appointment must be approved by the board. The selection process was developed in 2022, considering the requirements of SB 732 and OAR 581-022-2307, and is coordinated by the Office of Equity & Inclusion.

The 2024-2025 school year is the second consecutive full school year of the Beaverton Equity Advisory Committee as currently constituted. The committee is facilitated by administrative staff from the Office of Equity & Inclusion.

In October 2024, district staff, students, families and community members were invited to apply to be considered for appointment to openings on the equity advisory committee. A total of 36 applications were received. A selection committee conducted a blind review and assessment of the applications, applying a rubric. From the 36 applicants, 12 were selected to be recommended for appointment to the equity advisory committee, joining the 7 returning committee members. Following board approval of the recommended appointees, the combined membership is a diverse body primarily representative of underserved student groups; the committee includes 6 students, 5 parents or family members of current students, 5 staff members (2 classified, 3 licensed) and 3 community members (1 of whom also serves on the budget committee).

## **Committee Meetings and Topics of Discussion**

The Equity Advisory Committee meets six times per year, approximately every other month. Meetings are held at the district office and are open to the community in person or by watching the live-stream via Zoom.

Prior to each meeting, committee members receive communication about the upcoming meeting and agenda items. Members are invited to add items to agendas. The EAC has discussed a number of topics important to district operations, including practices that support immigrant and

**Belong. Believe. Achieve.**

*Beaverton School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on any basis protected by law, including but not limited to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national or ethnic origin, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, familial status, economic status, veteran status, or because of a perceived or actual association with any other persons within these protected classes.*

refugee students, the district's model for serving English learners, the proposed cell phone and personal mobile device policy, generative AI responsible use guidelines, and providing input and recommendations on the crafting of guidance for schools when hosting cultural celebrations and events. With each meeting, members share perspectives and engage in dialogue on agenda items. In addition to discussing planned items, members are encouraged to share what is happening in the district from their perspectives about the experience of students in historically underserved populations in the district and those who are also underrepresented in the district. Discussions include the experiences of students, families and staff. Below is a summary of key discussion items.

### **Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students and Families**

The Office of Equity & Inclusion shared proposed content for the online resources the district would post on the website regarding BSD's support of immigrant and refugee families. The EAC engaged in thoughtful conversation on what supports were available, what school staff knew and still need to know, and the resources within the community to share with staff and community. EAC members discussed the experiences of immigrant and refugee students and families and the need for BSD to publicly support staff, students and families within this demographic group. The EAC felt that sharing resources was critical to providing the community with the most appropriate information and recognized the need for community members to feel safe. The feeling of hypervisibility of immigrants and refugees was discussed, as was the need for staff to use culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches in their support of students and families. The EAC was supportive of the district's approach to communication and training of administrators and office professionals.

### **English Language Development: Co-Teaching Model Update**

The EAC asked for the MLD department to provide an update on the department's work with the co-teaching model. Multilingual Department Administrator Dr. Toshiko Maurizio presented to the EAC and engaged in thoughtful dialogue. In summary, the discussion included the background and research on BSD moving to a co-teaching model to support multilingual students and improve overall learning outcomes. Pre-pandemic studies from Education Northwest showed promising progress toward proficiency, and the district prioritized this approach in its high school redesign for the 2024-25 school year. By reducing student-teacher ratios to 45 to 1, BSD aims to foster a more collaborative teaching environment, emphasizing dual-language instruction and a dual-endorsed model. Standards alignment, curriculum adoption and literacy support are key factors in this shift, with research from John Hattie highlighting the substantial impact of collective effort efficacy. Discussion from EAC members aligned with and underscored the need for content teacher training in the co-teaching model and the importance of addressing students' isolation and sense of belonging, especially for those who are new to the United States. The EAC is proud of the work of the Multilingual Department, which is centered on the needs of multilingual students.

### **Cell Phone and Device Policy**

The EAC is aware that school cell phone policies are a complex issue, balancing concerns over distractions, disruptions and potential dangers with the opportunities they provide for learning and communication. The EAC discussed how unchecked phone use can lead to disruptions in class, hinder academic development, lower attention spans, and contribute to online bullying and isolation. They also note that lack of boundaries can create challenges in fostering mutual respect

between students and teachers. The EAC discussed practices which promote thoughtful use when phones can serve as valuable learning tools, helping students connect, engage and build relationships. The recommendation from the EAC to the cell phone policy staff team was for BSD to work toward a policy that encourages responsible usage—such as using devices for translation, research, civil discourse, and other classroom and age-related content appropriate use—while allowing students to gradually self-govern as they mature and grow through the school system.

### **Generative AI Responsible Use Guidelines**

The EAC engaged in a thoughtful discussion about the proposed generative AI guidance for students and staff. The EAC believes such guidance should be focused on responsible AI use in education, balancing its benefits with ethical concerns. The EAC members acknowledge AI can help differentiate reading levels, support lesson planning and create practice questions. Still, there is caution around students relying on AI instead of developing their own work. Critical thinking and ethical use are key skills for students across all grade levels. The committee would like to see BSD ensure AI is a tool for learning rather than a substitute for creativity. The committee believes transparency in AI usage, consistent districtwide policies and professional development for educators are essential to guide appropriate implementation. Equity concerns also arose, as not all students have equal access to AI or devices that can access the internet outside of school. The committee is encouraged that the district is aiming to establish guidelines that encourage responsible, beneficial AI use for students and staff, while protecting academic integrity and fostering student growth.

### **Guiding Schools When Hosting Cultural Celebrations and Events**

The last meeting of the EAC for the 2024-2025 school year will focus on creating guidance for schools when hosting cultural celebrations and events. In communication with some EAC members, accessing the expertise and lived experience of the committee will be valuable in helping shape guidance for schools. In essence, all celebrations and events should lift and highlight the home cultures of students without harming or minimizing others. The committee will focus on procedural safeguards for the setting up and for during the event, including expectations for students, staff, families and other visitors. Respect for the cultural diversity of the community and safety for all participants will be at the center. This guidance will be ready to share with schools at the start of the 2025-2026 school year.

### **Recommendation**

The committee chair recommends the school board receive this report as the committee's report at the May 13, 2025 board meeting.