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**4:30 PM**

**Equity Committee Meeting**

- I. **Welcome**
  1. Land acknowledgment
- II. **Review and approval of meeting minutes** 2
- III. **Check-In/Warm Up**
- IV. **Group Norms, Organization and Purpose**
- V. **Budget Committee member selection process (School Board Chair Maya Rabasa)**
- VI. **Public Comment:**
- VII. **Closing Remarks**
- VIII. **4J Equity Advisory Committee Calendar:**
  - Thursday, September 15, 2022
  - Thursday, October 6, 2022
  - Thursday, November 10, 2022
  - Thursday, December 1, 2022
  - Thursday, January 12, 2023
  - Thursday, February 9, 2023
  - Thursday, March 9, 2023
  - Thursday, April 6, 2023
  - Thursday, May 11, 2023
  - Thursday, June 1, 2023

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## **MINUTES OF THE 4J EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

School District 4J, Lane County, Oregon  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

September 15, 2022  
4:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Alicia Longoria, Allison Espinoza, Amelia Able, Ana Arias, Anil Oomen, Bilibineli Blackthorn, Chaz Mills, Donovan Locklyn, Eric Richardson, Heather Kliever, Jeni Canaday, Jun Orion, Kevin Summerfield, Marx Skorodinsky, Miles Pendleton, Nichoel Frye, Noah Oristano, Sahara Roan, Sammy Vettalta, committee members; Facilitator Darren Reiley, Center for Dialogue and Resolution, Inc.; Maya Rabasa, Michelle Hsu, 4J Board members; Superintendent Andy Dey, Cydney Vandercar, Georgiann Jones, Larry Williams, Misael Flores Gutierrez, Scout Gerdes, 4J staff.

### **I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Mr. Flores Gutierrez and Mr. Williams called the meeting to order and introduced themselves.

Mr. Gutiérrez provided an overview of the meeting and introduced Mr. Reiley, who would facilitate the meeting.

Mr. Reiley expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work with the Equity Advisory Committee.

#### **1. Land Acknowledgement**

Ms. Rabasa read Land Acknowledgement statement and noted that

#### **2. Connections and Introductions**

Mr. Gutiérrez reviewed the meeting format and asked each participant to share their vision and wishes for the committee and environment they hoped to create. Those presented shared the following

- safe expression
- empowerment of students and staff
- students feel a sense of community
- students have a voice
- students are supported for their talents and strengths
- feel safe and welcomed
- facilitate the committee's process and promote inclusivity
- students come with whole self and belong
- opportunity to learn how best to operate
- educational environment that fosters sense of belonging
- students feel empowered, uplifted, prepared
- all students feel safe
- develop a love of learning
- students feel represented and heard in their communities
- learn to advocate for self

- students able to find acceptance and understanding
- students able to see themselves and feel heard
- thankful for the opportunity to serve on committee and inclusion of people with disabilities
- hope schools have culture of community and connectivity
- all students feel safe and accepted
- students are able to fulfill their future goals
- actively recruit Native teachers and acknowledge different cultures
- assist students to pursue any goals they choose
- develop sense of agency and connection
- all feel welcomed
- build capacity
- be more reflective and responsive and open to new things
- address students interests and needs

Mr. Reiley thanked everyone for sharing their thoughts.

Ms. Rabasa said she was excited about the committee and particularly the presence of student voices. She hoped to see a student-driven agenda as the committee moved to implement the spirit of the State's mandate.

## **II. Purpose of the Educational Equity Advisory Committee**

### **1. Senate Bill 732 Review**

Mr. Reiley reviewed SB 732, which became effective July 1, 2022, and required school districts to establish an educational equity advisory committee. The committee would be responsible for advising the Board and superintendent about the educational equity impacts of policy decisions.

Mr. Reiley said additionally the committee would be responsible for informing the school district of situations that could negatively impact underrepresented students and advising how to address those situations. He said the purpose was to create a culture of inclusivity and equity for parents, teachers, students and community members. The committee could also prepare an end-of-year report.

### **2. Clarifying the Role of the Committee**

Ms. Hsu said she wanted to see results from the committee's work, rather than recommendations, and be able to influence district policies through direct communications with students, educators, and parents across the district. She said the State's mandate showed a need for moving toward equity.

In response to questions from Mr. Skorodinsky, Mr. Flores Gutierrez said the committee was permanent. There had not yet been guidance about working with other school districts, but that additional guidance from the State on the committee's role would be forthcoming soon.

Ms. Rabasa noted that the committee would be advisory to both the Board and Superintendent. The Board was primarily responsible for policy decisions and looked forward to the committee's feedback. The superintendent was interested in the committee's input could impact the day-to-day operations of the District and practices that were not codified in policies. She felt that was a very powerful component of the committee's role.

Mr. Reiley said his role was that of a facilitator, not necessarily a participant, to assure that all voices were heard. This portion of the meeting would develop agreements about the process in order to give each committee member an opportunity to express their ideas.

Regarding a time commitment, Mr. Williams said the advantage of the committee was that many different stakeholders' perspectives could be shared. He expected that members would serve at least one-year terms, although he hoped that student members would be able to stay on the committee for the duration of their enrollment in 4J schools as their input would become more valuable as they gained experience with the committee's work and were able to provide input from fellow students. The Board and superintendent would determine terms of service as more guidance was provided.

### **III. Community Agreements**

Mr. Reiley said equity was not just a goal to be sought, but a means to achieve it. He asked committee members to suggest guidelines for the committee to adopt to achieve the goals members expressed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Summerfield said he provided his students with a copy of author Glenn Singleton's book "Courageous Conversation" which set forth community agreements. He said those included:

- stay engaged, refuse to let heart and mind check out of the conversation
- speak your truth, be willing to take risks, and be honest about your thoughts, feelings, and opinions
- experience some discomfort to deal with the reality of inequity in an honest and forthright way
- expect and accept non-closure
- listen to learn

Ms. Kliever suggested a clear and succinct agenda for each meeting. Mr. Reiley said there would be an agenda for each meeting that would provide structure and predictability for committee proceedings.

Mr. Reiley said during meetings he waited for three others to speak before speaking again.

Mr. Skorodinsky said members should share "air" time and be mindful of others.

Mr. Kliever asked if the committee was subject to public meeting laws in terms of quorum prohibitions on communications such as a group chat.

Ms. Rabasa stated that only elected officials were subject to public meeting laws. The committee was subject to that law with regard to publicizing their meetings and making them accessible to the public, but could otherwise discuss issues among themselves without quorum concerns. She noted committee proceedings were broadcast, recorded and preserved in perpetuity.

Mr. Reiley said staff was discussing the option of an informal mid-month chat via ZOOM to consider issues for the committee to address.

Mr. Williams agreed an informal chat would be a good opportunity for members to gather their thoughts, share ideas and reduce anxiety about presenting in public.

Mr. Reiley said it was important for the committee to build a sense of intellectual to the extent possible. He also asked members to reflect on how each member needed to be shown respect; that could be different for each person. He invited other suggestions for process agreements and asked members to consider before the next meeting how they would want to be reminded, if necessary, about the agreements during discussions of challenging topics.

Mr. Richardson commented that it was a wonderful development to have the voices of youth be a mandated part of the process. He hoped the committee would strive to create a unifying narrative that recognized all people's values and the value of education for individuals and society. The work would have waves that entered the community and future lives of young people.

Mr. Reiley invited members to suggest themes and topics for the committee to address as it moved forward with its work.

Ms. Able said she had spoken publicly to many groups about what it was like to have a disability. She said advocacy for disability rights was very important. She had worked with young people with disabilities for 20 years and her disability was Downs Syndrome. She appreciated comments from committee members and the role of the committee. It was important to establish diverse classrooms that included students with disabilities. She shared difficult experiences she had during high school and felt school should be about friendships, inclusion and kindness.

Mr. Pendleton said it was important to consider the lived realities of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students and teachers and how they could navigate through the education systems and institutions in a way that was empowering and allowed them to be their true, authentic selves. Any individual of marginalized background or community who interacted with the school system also needed to be considered as equity was not piecemeal.

Mr. Locklyn felt it was important to talk about unity for minority students. He attended South Eugene High School and said there were only a handful of black people in South Eugene and they were separated from each other. He wished the school would be more proactive in trying to bring people of the same ethnic and cultural background together to learn about their history and share it with other students.

Chaz Miller noted that committee members were in agreement there was a need to create a safe and unified community at 4J. That should include opportunities for students to connect not just in their schools, but across the district.

Mr. Summerfield encouraged literature about black history in all 4J libraries and classrooms.

Mr. Donovan concurred with Mr. Summerfield suggestion.

Mr. Skorodinsky said he taught students from all of the comprehensive high schools and noted how different a student's education and experience could be, depending on which school they attended. That concerned him and it seemed inherently inequitable.

Ms. Arias said there was much room for improvement in all aspects of the education system and growing support to achieve equity. She agreed that educational experiences varied among schools, groups and buildings and asked how resources and information could be shared with all.

Mr. Pendleton said the committee should also consider defining and identifying in a tangible way what the abstract terms of equity, fairness and justice what they meant and how they would look in an applicable sense. He said the committee should examine the immersion and IB programs and determine what efforts the district was making in terms of recruitment and retention.

Mr. Reiley said staff would generate a running list of the themes and topics to be addressed at subsequent meeting. There would be an opportunity at each meeting to raise questions or requests for new business at future meetings. He asked student members of the committee to share their experiences so far in the school year.

Mr. Donovan said he was meeting other black students and making new friends this year and not as lonely.

Ms. Roan was pleased that many students of color were transferring into her school and she was meeting new people.

#### **IV. Public Comments**

There were no public comments during the committee's inaugural meeting, but there would be at future meetings.

#### **V. Closing Remarks**

Mr. Reiley reminded committee members that the chat was available during meetings if they were not comfortable speaking in public.

Mr. Williams agreed with Ms. Hsu that the committee should move toward actionable plans as it began to understand where the district was as an institution and the experiences of its students and teachers. He thanked participants for giving their time to the committee's work.

Ms. Hsu thanked all who participated in the meeting. She understood that ZOOM was not a comfortable experience for everyone and invited suggestions for other platforms for communicating among members.

Mr. Williams asked Board members and Superintendent Dey to share with the committee at future meetings any issues that they wanted to see considered.

Ms. Rabasa asked staff to create a contact directory of the committee that members could opt into in order to communicate with each other. She also wanted to hear from staff members about what they wanted to see happen in the district and how to create a space in which student members felt comfortable participating. She looked forward to creating relationships among committee members to facilitate difficult conversations.

Mr. Flores Gutierrez said he would create and share a Google folder that members could use to share their thoughts and contact information.

#### **VI. 4J Equity Advisory Committee Calendar**

Thursday, October 6, 2022

Thursday, November 10, 2022

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Mr. Reiley thanked everyone for their contributions to the discussion. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

*(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)*

DRAFT