



Equity Advisory Council Minutes

6 p.m., October 8, 2020

Zoom

Present:

Members: Kira Adenwala, Alyssa Bartosh, Leigh Collier, Jacob Dereje, Luis Fernando Salguero, Michael Gillis, Carita Green, Grantham Green, Kathryn Haave, Emma Huppert, Calvin Keasling, Cathy Kindem, Lee Mbiyu, Becky Melville, Sahasra Molleti, Pha Chia Moua, Lauren Nelson, Shaun Pannu, Veronica Romas, Kate Schmidt, Scott Tryggeseth, Julie Wavrunek and Carol Wekesser; ex-officio School Board members Sachin Isaacs, Cory Johnson and Jackie Magnuson; Superintendent Mary Kreger; staff members Michael Bolsoni, Caley Jorgensen, Robin Gordon and Sally Soliday, and guest Sheri Allen.

UPDATES

Equity and Inclusion Coordinator Robin Gordon introduced the group and explained the critical work the Equity Advisory Council will do to help make a difference in the district. She asked council members to use an educational perspective through planning that will result in creating safe spaces for students and promote equity and diversity. She stressed the urgency of this important work, but the process should be thoughtful and effective in order to create the biggest impact in supporting students. Members introduced themselves and shared their connection with District 196. Before members worked in small groups, Gordon reviewed the Circle Agreements which asks group members to respect each other and support a safe space for everyone to speak. In small groups, council members shared why they wanted to be on the Equity Advisory Council. TeamWorks International representative Sheri Allen and Superintendent Mary Kreger shared the common themes that arose from the small groups. These themes include the following: passion for students, continue to learn for personal growth, learn more about the communities, break down barriers, promote equality and equity, fight against microaggressions, personal passion, urgency and commitment, improve achievement and create district accountability.

School Board Director Cory Johnson explained the actions taken by the School Board following the death of George Floyd and the direction the board gave the superintendent to develop recommendations to identify and address racial inequities in the district. Kreger said it is unusual for a school board to support a superintendent in this work, so she is thankful for the collaboration she has with board members and for them recognizing the importance of prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion.

Kreger shared a framework the district will use, which aligns with the work of My Brother's Keeper Alliance of the Obama Foundation. The four action steps are to review data, curriculum and instructional practices; engage stakeholders; report findings and recommendations, and take action. Kreger said the district will develop a more robust operational plan to accomplish this. The EAC will help set the groundwork. Gordon shared information about the Achievement and Integration Plan and how it addresses racially isolated schools and supports district programming. She described the areas supported by the Achievement and Integration budget, like the AVID program, Cultural Family

Advocates, academic enrichment and professional development. Director of Elementary Education Sally Soliday and Director of Secondary Education Michael Bolsoni shared how elementary and secondary schools are promoting equity, diversity and inclusion. Elementary has improved its classroom libraries and units of study to be more reflective of diverse cultures and talked about the social justice standards. Secondary shared about the Equity in Instructional Resource rubric being used to inventory books in units of study and the facilitation on book studies, professional learning opportunities and curriculum audits. Bolsoni and Soliday said this is just the start to improve its efforts.

Kreger reviewed the district priorities in relation to equity, including hiring a more diverse staff, having culturally responsive climate and instruction, teaching an inclusive and representative curriculum, giving fair and representative discipline and upholding accountability. Council members worked in small groups and discuss the current reality of schools and what the desired daily experience should be for students and staff. Allen and Kreger shared themes from the small group discussions, and included the following: curriculum and staff representing the cultures of students, feeling safe in school, positive outcomes for students, positive environment for all, recognizing unconscious biases, performing equity audits on current curriculum and monitor achievement growth, feeling valued and welcomed, stop microaggressions and providing resources to teachers to have conversations with students.

NEXT MEETING

6-8 p.m., November 12, 2020

Zoom