



## Equity Advisory Council

6 p.m., March 11, 2021

Zoom

**Members:** EAC Chair Pha Chia Moua, EAC Vice Chair Calvin Keasling, Kira Adenwala, Alyssa Bartosh, Leigh Collier, Jacob Dereje, Luis Fernando Salguero, Michael Gillis, Tian Grace, Carita Green, Grantham Green, Kathryn Haave, Emma Huppert, Cathy Kindem, Lee Mbiyu, Becky Melville, Sahasra Molleti, Lauren Nelson, Shaun Pannu, Veronica Ramos, Kate Schmidt, Scott Tryggeseth, Jorja Valandra, Julie Wavrunek and Carol Wekesser; ex-officio School Board members Sachin Isaacs, Cory Johnson and Jackie Magnuson; Superintendent Mary Kreger; Director of Equity and Inclusion Virgil Jones; Director of Secondary Education Michael Bolsoni, and Executive Assistant of the Superintendent and School Board members Caley Longendyke. Guest speakers Dario Otero and Paula Forbes.

### UPDATES

Superintendent Mary Kreger welcomed the group and welcomed special guest Paula Forbes, a consultant assisting the school district with equity work and the coordination of a conference for District 196 students. Alongside Falcon Ridge Middle School administrator, and former equity coordinator, Carita Green, Forbes provided an update on the planning of the student conference and thanked Green for coordinating students coming together for helping plan the event. She thanked all the staff who have created a supportive environment for these students to plan for the student conference. Eastview High School senior Lili Nikolova shared her experience with planning the event. Forbes explained the kickoff of the event will start March 17 with a four-week window for students to submit projects on proposals where they want to see change, such as the physical environment, programs, activities and curriculum. Green said there will be a website with the information.

Director of Equity and Inclusion Virgil Jones introduced himself as the new director and thanked EAC members for committing themselves to help with equity in the district. He explained in equity work, there are fundamental areas to take on: we have to know who our students are, we have to know what their needs are, we have to figure out how to help students meet those needs, and we have to help adults help students meet those needs. He said the EAC will work towards that and is looking forward to making a difference in students' lives.

School District Attorney Jill Coyle explained the annual review of the Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook and said there are proposed changes to lessen consequences by eliminating suspensions as a form of discipline in grades preK-2 and dramatically reducing suspension for grades 3-5. Other proposed changes are related to behaviors during distance learning and online. She said historically, school districts disproportionately discipline students of color and students receiving special education services more than other peers. District 196 has been successful in the last few years to improve the disproportionalities, but needs to keep working to address them. Coyle said principals will present the proposed changes to their parent groups, like their site council. She said district and school administrators are reviewing discipline practices with an equity lens. There are plans to create a smaller committee to review the way the district organizes discipline in its handbook. Green provided examples of the restorative practices happening in schools, such as developing restorative circles with staff then working with students, administrators visiting individual students in class instead of pulling them out of class and developing behavior expectations together between staff and students.

Jones said the EAC is solution-driven and proposed different ways to do important equity work on a limited meeting schedule, including sub groups and checking in during the summer. EAC Chair Pha Chia Moua said the group will be deciding priorities to be able to deep dive in the areas and create thoughtful recommendations for

equitable change. Questions asked: What is the time commitment for priorities? What can be accomplished? How can the work be measured? Members worked in small groups to interpret and provide definitions for equity, educational equity and anti-racist. The group met again to summarize the discussions.

**NEXT MEETING**

6 p.m., April 1, 2021

Zoom