



## **Equity Advisory Council**

6 p.m., August 19, 2021

Zoom

**Members:** 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 members Superintendent Mary Kreger; School Board members Sachin Isaacs, Cory Johnson and Jackie Magnuson; Director of Equity and Inclusion Virgil Jones; Director of Elementary Education Sally Soliday, and Director of Secondary Education Michael Bolsoni.

### **UPDATES**

Superintendent Mary Kreger provided an update about summer planning around COVID-19. She shared it has been difficult for school districts to make decisions about the school year without specific requirements from the state or county. The Minnesota Department of Education made an announcement that schools should be testing students, but District 196 doesn't plan to test students, because there are limited resources to provide this. There will be information shared with families on where they can get regularly testing done. She provided an update about School Board meetings and how they have been more attended. She explained the new listening sessions will start in September and were created with parents in mind who wouldn't usually be able to attend the regular School Board meetings at Dakota Ridge School or don't feel comfortable to speak in front of a large crowd. She shared her excitement to be able to connect with parents in their own communities by hosting the listening sessions in various locations. The intention of the listening sessions isn't just to provide an opportunity for parents to share concerns, but for them to share their students' experiences in District 196 schools. Kreger updated EAC members about the School Board election and said there are 18 board candidates, with two being incumbents.

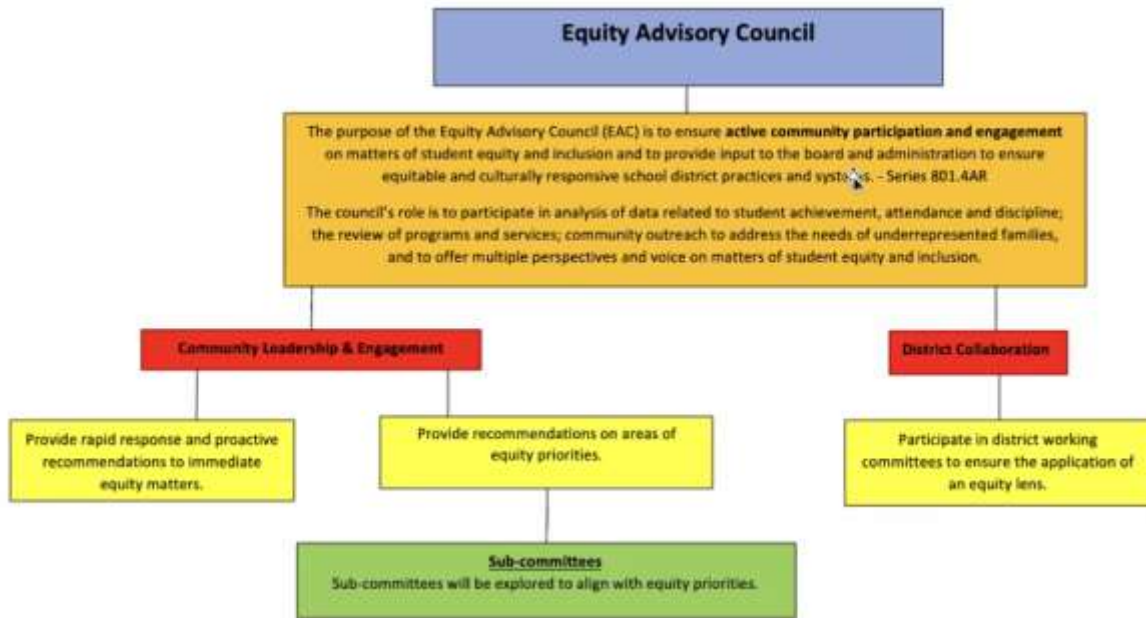
Board members shared their thoughts on the work of the Equity Advisory Council and thanked the EAC members for their commitment. Jones introduced Violeta Hernandez Espinosa, the new equity and inclusion coordinator. Hernandez Espinosa shared her excitement to join the team and she shared her background in equity, inclusion and education. Jones thanked teachers and Cultural Family Advocates for working during the summer to support students and families. Jones said the district is going through operational planning, and he said it is the district's priority to align its equity efforts and social-emotional learning plans with the work. He spoke more about the social-emotional learning and said it is an area the council will work on. He said restoring and maintaining mental health will be an area of focus as the district transitions back in to in-person learning.

School General Counsel Jill Coyle provided an update on the status of the development of a gender inclusion regulation. The regulation will cover various areas outlining how schools will support students who are transgender. The state doesn't require a policy or regulation in school districts, but provides a toolkit for schools to use when supporting transgender students. It has been used as a resource in helping develop the regulation. Coyle said the district has transgender students and administration is working to create a regulation to help provide additional guidance. Experiences in other school districts have prepared District 196 to make decisions on developing its regulation. She shared the various sections the regulation would cover. Coyle said the regulation is still under development. Administration may explore opportunities for student feedback.

Keasling provided an overview of the EAC meeting and workgroup model. The purpose of the EAC is to ensure active community participation and engagement on matters on student equity and inclusion and to provide input

to the board and administration to ensure equitable and culturally responsive school district practices and systems. The council’s role is to participate in analysis of data related to student achievement, attendance and discipline; the review of programs and services; community outreach to address the needs of underrepresented families, and to offer multiple perspectives and voice on matters of student equity and inclusion. Two areas of the EAC is community leadership and engagement, and district collaboration. The council talked about roles and involvement in the district’s work.

The council talked about the schedule for the 2021-22 school year. The meeting frequency for the whole group will be reduced to allow time for subcommittee groups to meet. The subcommittee groups will cover various topics, which will be determined in the upcoming weeks.



**NEXT MEETING**  
6 p.m., September 16, 2021  
Zoom