

# Equity Meeting

Meeting Minutes - June 1, 2022

6:03 PM Meeting called to order.  
Board members present: Mariam Khan, David Asbery

Additions to the agenda: Gary Highsmith (HR) report on minority teacher recruitment budget changes.

## Information Item I: Food Security Report

Tom Ariola: Have distributed thousands of meals.

Gary Highsmith: Want security in addition to administration oversight at food site distribution.

David Asbery: Does security refer to a security team or for traffic? What are the concerns?

Gary Highsmith: Will be discussing more of this at the meeting tomorrow.

Tom Ariola: General public will have access to school to get food and eat it there.

Mariam Khan: Important to have security guards like Lamond who have built a relationship with students and families. Foster a safe and welcoming environment for our students and families.

## Information Item II: Technology Report

Jody Goeler: Core team lost a person, Karen Kaplan. Other folks on team have picked up slack. Level funding of budget may negatively impact equity aspect of technology for students and families.

Sue Smey: Devices provided to students during Covid-19. As an alliance district, 1700 laptops provided by state. Ensured staff also had devices for online instruction. Currently: 9th, 7th, and 4th graders will get new devices. Older devices being pushed down to elementary school. Without funding, more challenging to meet student needs. Chrome book wear and tear, accidents and screen repair. BOE approved new technology policy—first time student breaks device, free pass; patterns tracked for repeated breaks. Students not being charged, except for some cases including charger loss and repeated damage.

Jody Goeler: Asked core team to ask for funding, but reduce cost of technology with budget restraints in regards to grants.

Tom Ariola: 0 budget increase. Dive into Title I funds and ESSER funds. Title I funding for equity programming will be used to fund other programs now. There's also a \$600K hole in busing. Impacting teachers, administrators, and teachers. Had a plan for full technology upgrades in four schools—this is now gone.

Gary Highsmith: Program to invest in 3 residents this year; 6 residents next year which is as high as it gets by state standards. These residents may be lost, even though we have paid for their training and benefits. Elementary school force cannot be shrunk, and those folks will not be able to be brought on. The flat funding has a direct and tangible impact on diversifying staff.

David Asbery: Can't do what we were doing last year due to flat funding. Are we looking at what computers we can keep, throw away, and purchase? Do we get money for getting rid of them?

Sue Smey: Some chrome books are at least 6 years old and have begun to break down. Not looking to take those out of circulation. Can't move forward with plan to replace those that have broken down due to budget issues. Stacks of old Chromebooks kept in technology department for spare parts.

Tom Ariola: Some laptops are sold after spare parts are harvested. Not more than \$2,000 is made.

Mariam Khan: Considering all of these budget constrains as we tackle equity. Equity services and programming are the first to be cut, I hope we think before administrative raises or other expenses. Equity needs to be a priority. How can we as Equity Committee members advocate for these equity items?

Tom Ariola: Not making cuts to budget. Not coming from general funds, rather from grants from other directions. Not cutting equity, just shifting it. Equity is not professional development or supplies, but salaries and other places. Good news: alliance funding went up \$1.7 million. But it forces ESSER grant to evaporate very quickly. \$3 million has been used as of the last two years. Equity will be the last to be cut.

David Asbery: Are there other grants we can tap into?

Tom Ariola: We no longer have a grant writer who is searching for grants. Jody, Gary and Tom do a great job getting these grants as a core team.

Gary Highsmith: Should not be added to Sue Smey's responsibilities.

Mariam Khan: Certainly. Unfair and irresponsible to be tasking our finest without compensating them for their time or additional work!

Tom Ariola: Will bring grants to operations committee.

Gary Highsmith: Used to have grant writer who would get percentage if grant is received. Go-to people to help write grants, finding and accessing grants is more of the issue.

David Asbery: Seen articles about money being put into Keefe Center. Flat funding is horrible from Council—need to be creative to find money. Very dissatisfied with council reasoning.

Jody Goeler: Disconcerting part after attending Council meeting is there was a tone to better depend where money is spent. Don't attend equity meeting or operation budget of BOE. Obvious and fundamental violation of state statutes as BOE is best suited to make these decisions.

Mariam Khan: It seems flat funding has been a recurring issue—and impacted the Board not just this year. I'm interested in how we build a vision with what we're working with.

### Information Item III: LGBTQ+ Update

Amanda Fercucci: LGBTQ+ task force has 40+ people with students, teachers, clergy people, BOE members, and others. Pride task force—had a flag raising tonight and DECA t-shirts provided! First time pride flag was raised; community forum and dinner tomorrow on gender usage and pronoun. Group of panelists for Q&A. June 18th, Town Center park with DJs, bounce house, face painting, food trucks.

Mariam Khan: I am really excited for these series of events. How can we have events like these added as assemblies for our students? And maybe a presentation to our equity committee on the topics you shared?

Amanda Fercucci: Gender equity club and pride club have been instrumental and are on task force. Students in these clubs have given ideas for pride! Open to having events and presentations to the high school.

Mariam Khan: Let's get a presentation in for the Board. Especially important for student voices to be present and cultivating this space at the Board level.

David Asbery: Agreed, let's not wait and reach out to the chair to make space for this.

Mariam Khan: I will reach out to Amanda and schedule this!

6:58 PM

Meeting Adjourned

Motion: David Asbery; Second: Mariam Khan