

Equity Meeting | Wednesday, October 2

Call to order: 6:04 PM

Members present: Mariam Khan, Kevin Shea, David Asbery, Gary Highsmith, Erin Bailey, Linda Tran Morbidelli

No public comment

No additions to the agenda

Information Item I: District Food Service/Security

Tom Ariola: Meal count is working well, breakfast count is down at HS. Under a national school lunch program and smart funds grant from the state. In February, will send a letter to families that the program will end.

Gary Highsmith: Non-Title I families are also affected and deserve support.

Mariam: Free lunches are guaranteed to Title I schools. How long have non-Title I schools been covered?

Tom/Gary: District entered into CEP program. Title I schools will always receive free breakfasts/lunches forever. Other schools were added due to Covid-19.

Tom: Negative lunches. If students can't pay, they won't be turned away. District picks up the cost.

David Asbery: At what point do we let the public know what we're up against, without creating a scare?

Tom: Notification of plan prior to the holiday season. There is \$60K allotted in the budget as an equity item to pay for continued meals.

Mariam: What parameters are we utilizing to identify areas with food insecurity in our community?

Tom: Majority of students are identified under state—SNAP and HUSKY.

Mariam: How can the BOE be in partnership with administration to support this going forward?

Tom/Gary: Will go through the Operations committee. Parameters and possibilities will be discussed with the BOE.

David: It is important we work in a timely manner to prevent rushed, special meetings.

Mariam: Tom mentioned an equity line item. Can you explain that? When was the Equity committee involved in those discussions?

Gary: No line in the budget explicitly says “equity.” Rather, money for this has been tagged under student activities.

Mariam: Propose these student activities line items come through the Equity committee if Equity will be discussing and reviewing the impact and logistics. Best to have a holistic view as a committee, from the conception to the execution.

Information Item II: District Communication Plan

Mariam: Appreciated dialogue regarding communication past meeting. The Equity committee has taken time to review communication strategies. These specific approaches have already been established and are in use.

Gary: Committed to communicating in every shape and form. Would like to reconvene in the Equity committee and review concerns around communication and transparency. Administration can make adjustments as needed.

Mariam: Time as a committee is best spent on voting and creating new practices and avenues for equity i.e. student activities, after-school engagements, sports. Also, issues affecting students in broader discussion with food distribution plan: housing insecurity, period poverty. Would like to collaborate and move beyond simplistic review of information to creation and development.

David: There are other communication issues to address as well while we’re on the topic. For example, a parent has an issue and sends an email to the Board and Administration. Who is responsible for responding? We need a better system to address these issues in a targeted, systematic fashion. More effective way to streamline this?

Gary: Can send out a clarification with example emails of who to contact to families. Administration will work on addressing this.

Adjourn: 6:39

First: David Asbery

Second: Mariam Khan