EAAC March 15, 2023
Summary Notes

Committee Members attending: Jill, Lena, Mohamed, Randy, Harland, Paul, Monica, Amy, Susie, Marta, Garrett, Nathan, Haruka

Staff attending: Pat (facilitator), Shomari

1. History of Critical Criteria
The group reviewed the history and purpose of the Critical Criteria, which was originated as a document called the Equity Lens during the Equity Advisory Group 1.0 (2018-2019). It was submitted to the Superintendent with recommendations in June 2019. The School Board modified the Equity Lens into the Critical Criteria and it became part of the Equity and Accountability Policy. Procedure 0130P.

2. Discussion. The group discussed four questions posed by Dr. Kelly Aramaki:

1. **How has it been used and to what extent has that use been in line with our intentions?**
    - The intent of the Critical Criteria is to serve as a collaborative inquiry and conversation process with diverse stakeholders in order to produce greater equity for those farthest from educational justice. It is intended to be used throughout a process, not just at the beginning to determine intent, but also at the end to determine impact. Inquiry IS the power of the tool/approach.
    - The Critical Criteria is overly complex and confusing and can repel folks from engaging with it
    - It's being used as a "check-box" activity without deeper understanding or conversation. It feels like a simplistic approach.
    - We can't tell whether it's being used because it's not always visible to parents, students. We do hear people in the community talking about it - so it's seen by some.
    - It's unclear who the audience is: district decision makers, public?
    - The Critical Criteria is being weaponized
    - Language access is an issue
    - It is being used from one's own perspective which becomes self-serving and leads to weaponizing, rather than being used to look at the global perspective
    - Often it creates more Black and Brown Tax labor to complete - staff of color are asked to gather affinity groups, do the translation, and produce the feedback
    - It takes courage, knowledge and expertise to do a collaborative process like this - the tool could be used and still not surface critical conversation
    - It wasn't used early enough in the School Consolidation process, and if it had been might not have been weaponized
    - The community doesn't always understand the different between equality and equity

- Different cultural groups use social media differently so knowing a process like School Consolidation is happening is not always known by regular district channels

2. **What are the intersections we've noticed between the Critical Criteria and the decisions that have been made around policies, procedures, and programs?**
    - Not noticeable. Unclear. If it has, it's not visible and we are not seeing the connection between usage and changes in practice or policy.
    - We don't know whether this is this due to lack of buy-in? Lack of capacity? Lack of understanding?
    - If Critical Criteria played a role between version 1 and version 2 (March 9) of the School Consolidation report, that wasn't clear.
    - Changes were made to the second version March 9) of the School Consolidation report and people felt listened to! If this was due to using the CC, that should be made clear.

3. **How can the positionally of the people using the Critical Criteria be surfaced and made a more transparent part of the process?**
    - This is a critical missing aspect. It's not clear who is completing the Critical Criteria, whether it's an individual or group, with wide or narrow stakeholder input. This needs to be addressed.

4. **Now that the Critical Criteria has been implemented in a couple of high-impact decisions (e.g. the SRO/CEO program and the School Consolidation process), what recommendations do we have for how the district should use it moving forward?**

    A. Improve the Critical Criteria so it's more clear and less confusing to use.
        - An EAAC sub-group (Monica, Paul, Shomari) proposes to work with Dr. Aramaki to re-imagine and revise the Critical Criteria, with the goal of completing it this spring, including:

        i. Revisit the original intent and be sure that's being represented in the tool.

        ii. Create space/requirement to note who is filling it out, their positionality and how that has been taken into account in the process and findings.

        iii. Create space on the document to note whose input has been solicited, how and when.

        iv. Require documentation to describe what process was used to arrive at the Critical Criteria results, in addition to logging summary findings.

B. Consider having multiple stakeholders fill out then compare results and discuss. This would better meet the intent of a collaborative inquiry process. (one representative from a group is not enough)

C. The Critical Criteria needs to be reviewed in partnership. Consider inviting others to the table for analysis prior to the final decision.
   - We recommend the EAAC be used for this partnership. We strongly invite a direct relationship with the superintendent for this purpose. EAAC is open to more frequent meetings to make this vital advocacy work happen. We envision some cross-sectional meetings with the Student Advisory Group to engage and check out work.
   - Those immediately interested include Shomari, Paul, Nathan, Monica, Marta, Randy, Harland, Susie and Jill (not everyone was present)

D. Remind and recommunicate the purpose and intent of the Critical Criteria

E. Recommend usage by the cabinet to identify, consider, close gaps/inequities and establish thoughtful rationale for decisions

F. Use it to give credibility to decisions made by data - data is not the argument for change, the results of the CC will be the argument for change

G. Use the re-imagined and revised Critical Criteria, as well as the EAAC review partnership, for the Strategic Planning process this fall

3. Next Steps

- Paul, Monica and Shomari will convey these notes and the recommendations to Dr. Aramaki within a week (or his earliest availability).

- Based on Dr. Aramaki's response, we will use some April EAAC time to continue the conversation on Critical Criteria

- Study groups will schedule their next meeting and use the Critical Criteria to shape their discussion of their Advocacy Topic

- We will consider whether an additional meeting (s) is necessary to do Critical Criteria review partnership work this spring.

Summarized and submitted by EAAC Facilitator Pat Hughes on 3-16-2023.