

Board Special Meeting
Oversight Work Session: Equity, Partnerships & Engagement
Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.
Auditorium, John Stanford Center
2445 3rd Avenue S, Seattle, WA 98134



Minutes

Call to Order

Call to order

Director Harris called the meeting to order at 4:30pm. Superintendent Juneau, Directors Harris, Patu, Burke, Mack, DeWolf, and Geary were present

Equity Partnerships and Engagement

This meeting was staffed by Dr Brent Jones Chief Equity Partnerships Engagement

Staff in Attendance

Dr. Brent Jones, Chief of Equity Partnerships Engagement; James Bush, Director of School and Community Partnerships; Gail Morris, Native American Education Program Manager; Dr. Kyle Kinoshita, Executive Director Curriculum Assessment Instruction; Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Executive Director of Organizational Development & Equity; Dr. Concie Pedroza, Director of Racial Equity Advancement

Oversight Work Session: Equity Partnerships, & Engagement

Equity Partnerships and Engagement

Dr. Brent Jones gave a brief history of the division and department functions, noted that the division reports to C&I as well as Executive committee. He spoke about the strength of the team and thanked department leaders for their work. Dr. Jones summarized the agenda as well as shared a Power Point presentation on the status of Equity, Partnerships and Engagement

James Bush spoke about Community Partnerships, their work aligning to Continuous School Improvement Plans (CSIPs) and the district strategic plan.

Director Mack asked about Community Based Organizations, (CBOs) and oversight of their work, Dr. Jones explained the department's project management structure, and reported that managing alignment and integration with SPS standards can happen either at the school level or at central office.

Mr. Bush spoke about compliance, insurance and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs.)

Director DeWolf had questions about a partnership portal to focus areas of support, Director Harris chimed in, noting that 105 doors in are not ideal.

Mr. Bush spoke further about CBO's- their MOU's and partnership agreements. He reported that while SPS has over 300 Community Partners, we have over 600 partnership agreements and discussed developing capacity within school leadership structures

Director Patu asked about Safe & Healthy schools and whether they are implemented yet, and how to make sure schools are accountable. Mr. Bush noted that the building CSIPs are the biggest lever, and policy 0030- if those are being followed, leadership and can be assured expectations are in alignment with our high priority items. Director Patu reiterated her inquiry into accountability and action around equity standards and Dr. Jones noted that school leaders are getting trainings, and the directors of schools are responsible for oversight of that personnel.

Director Burke asked about whether Research and Evaluation had a role in this work. R&E is looking at refining questions on our climate surveys. The team spoke to their ability to look at refining questions on the School Climate Survey.

Director DeWolf asked if, regarding policy 0030, a resolution from the board would help give the policy 'more teeth' – Dr. Jones didn't feel it was necessary at this time.

Director Geary asked if extracurricular organizations count as CBO's as well as PTA's and expressed concern that as/if PTAs are changing their fundraising model to include giving to CBO's that operate within SPS whether we have the capacity to manage that. She also expressed concern around narrowing groups in a way that blocks opportunities. Dr. Jones noted that he'd include the lack of infrastructure regarding CBO management under risk on the ASWOT (Accomplishments, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threat/Risk.)

Director Harris inquired about elevating promising practices, and Dr. Jones deferred his answer to the portion when he'd later be covering SMART goal #2.

Mr. Bush concluded his remarks, noting that there would be continuing ongoing work with building leaders around a partnership portal.

Dr. Jones shared his Power Point beginning with Department Functions- SMART Goals 2 and 4, Community Partnerships, Native Education, Innovation, Improvement Science, Elevating Promising Practices, Adult Capacity Building, Meeting Standards, Problem Solving and Organizational Development. He shared the Equity, Partnerships and Engagement ASWOT (Accomplishments, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threat/Risk.)

He went on to share accomplishments, highlighting adaptive work. He noted talking about race becomes charged quickly, and thanked the team for their grace and tact, also their bold and unapologetic approach highlighting 0030 and promoting its tenets. Regarding opportunities, he thanked the board for their work 'friendraising' noting that good ambassadors gain advocates.

Dr. Jones spoke about publishing what has been successful marketing to staff and the public to highlight work. He noted some of this work isn't quantitative, but is around how people are growing together, and how the community sees the work as a culture change. He spoke about building awareness and accountability in to the work and pointed out that finding ways to build accountability is not an aside. He indicated Dr. Keisha Scarlett will speak more later regarding practice-based evidence and moving from theory to practice.

Director Patu inquired about what is being done to implement racial equity in our schools, expressed concern about the timeline of implementation of equity standards. Director Harris asked for clarity on the question, Director Patu expressed she wants to know specifically what we are doing to implement racial equity. Director Mack asked if the question is around varying levels of welcoming environment or disparity in student learning. Director Patu asked if those schools are getting the best leaders, best teachers, and if the students are learning.

Dr. Jones agreed on needing urgency – points to strategic plan, and a new commitment – BLTs are being trained, in turn influencing staffing. CSIPs that specifically target student populations for focus. He expressed pride in the shift from focusing on students as being the deficit, instead focusing on that adults need to be the vehicle of change responsible for a body of work that can make gains, stressed that adults need to innovate in their practice.

Director DeWolf pointed out adults and leaders need to reckon with our historical racism, and acknowledges this work invites our families and community to create a rich environment to commit to this work.

Dr. Jones invites Dr. Concie Pedroza to speak about Racial Equity teams and focus areas. Dr. Pedroza spoke about focus shifting where adults move from head and heart to analyzing their practice. She emphasized teaching practices, adults own learning and how are teachers setting the right conditions for student learning. She reiterated adults and leaders in schools need to set the right conditions and have action plans that align to CSIPS, and further, pointed out that measuring- using data- is a big part of that work.

The team went on to look at conditions of the 50 Racial Equity teams and reported we are at 50% of our schools having Racial Equity Teams and union is talking about that, building capacity for 50 more teams. She indicated the department of Racial Equity Advancement is working with other departments: PBIS work, Family Partnerships, C&I. Student Services, Arts- etc. Dr. Pedroza expressed that extended cabinet, central staff, schools, bus drivers, are all critical to this work. She emphasized all departments need to be racial equity depts and pointed out that the expectation that central staff participate on those teams is new.

Director Patu said she appreciates Dr Pedroza's comments.

Dr. Jones invited Gail Morris up to speak on progress in Native Ed.

Ms. Morris reported 20% gains in graduation rates and spoke about the expansion of the Huchoosedah program. She shared that the Huchoosedah program had led to gains in graduation rates and literacy. Further she stated the need to – with regard to graduation rates – decolonize the data and spoke to the need for accurate numbers. Currently the data shows a previous graduation rate in the 50% and now is in the 70% range. Ms. Morris reports spending 80% of time on 20% of the students, that the majority of students in Native Ed programs are doing very well.

Other positive notes include most her staff are native, which helps families interact and trust in their work, and a 2nd šəqəčib at Nathan Hale High School and Jane Addams Middle School. She noted that while it's a slow-moving process in September 2019 when Lincoln High School opens they'll have their own rooms for Native Ed programming. Currently the group is making cedar mortars, drums, and stools. Ms. Morris reflected on the importance of recognizing, honoring these students and their successes. Native Ed department continues these practices and are building momentum with families and students.

Ms. Morris reported an upcoming field trip to the career fair at Emerald Downs Muckleshoot, also students will have an opportunity to look at colleges with strong Indian programs and is hopeful to connect with Northwest Indian college. She concluded her remarks with the news of the updating of the catalog system at the Native Ed Library, work with an Indigenous Librarian-moving away from the colonial dewy decimal system. Dr. Jones celebrated the gains made in graduation rates.

Director Harris asked about Since Time Immemorial, and training for STAR mentor teachers. Ms. Morris reported STAR teachers have not yet been trained in STI, and one more day of training is being planned for teachers to be prepared to be September. Further, Dr. Kyle Kinoshita is working on getting that training accomplished. Director Harris wants to see that PD in the CBA because STI is a statute. Director DeWolf asked if the onus is on the Alliance for Education to get the teachers that training, and specifically thanked Ms. Morris for her commitment and giving of her personal time.

Dr. Jones moved on to highlighting division accomplishments including the Race and Equity Gallery in near the Superintendent wing at central office, the increase of Race and Equity teams and improving welcoming environments. He explained those things can be artifacts on the building walls that reflect the population, adults being present that interact positively and make students feel welcome. He reported about the African American Male Advisory Committee (AAMAC) and how they're finding out how powerful welcoming environments can be and sharing best practices. Director DeWolf expressed interest in joining the group to visit schools. Dr. Jones went on to share the work around Families, Education, Preschool Partnership (FEPP) alignment and their influence there, as well as extended cabinet learning – the foundational work happening in extended cabinet is equipping staff to make great decisions and lead in an effective way. Dr. Jones went on to say that the Listen and Learn Tour gave the dept credibility within the community.

Dr. Jones shared the division org chart and commended the staff noting their collective strengths, Directors Harris and DeWolf shared recognition of the team and their work.

Dr. Jones continued by speaking about SMART Goals: Goals and objectives
SMART Goal 2 is around eliminating the opportunity gap and works closely with Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) and Goal 4 is centered on community and family engagement and reports to Executive Committee.

He noted that alternatives to discipline and reducing missed instructional time is a gap closing strategy, as well as building adult capacity and efficacy create conditions for learning. He went on to speak about identity safe spaces and students being taught by people that look like them, and welcoming environment, referencing Director Harris' earlier question about measurements – and having different definitions – each area has groups that meet, from around the district to understand each practice, which need to be elevated and used as a gold standard – and piloting in schools – CBOs meeting to agree on and build through cross functional cross departmental efforts.

Director Harris asked why Ethnic Studies is listed as distinguished, and Dr. Jones explained the interim benchmarks have been met, though they are not yet at the end standard, they are on track with the work they've committed to. Director Geary mentioned that with the built-out benchmarks CBOs could be confused as to what was expected. Dr. Jones explained the difference between proficient and distinguished and went on to speak about building out tool kit.

On SMART Goal #4, community engagement, Dr. Keisha Scarlett spoke about authentic community engagement, not just box-checking. She pointed out the challenge is trying to identify leverage points through work at the school level, and prioritizing tiered schools, identifying involvement in professional learning work, principal professional development (PD), and begin working introducing our family engagement model, belief survey, adult capacity building.

Dr. Scarlett spoke about the work of the Department of Racial Equity Advancement (DREA) and family engagement team – cognition mindset shift – building capabilities, bring staff into communities of practice so they are connected with each other – and tracking outcomes around adult beliefs – recording baseline data in mindset shifts. She explained the belief survey is baseline data family involvement is in school, engagement is out of school help to support families engage outside of school (academically). Also, of note was the professional learning, and tracking the number of participants and need to move into measuring impact as well. Director DeWolf mentioned that the youth National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is doing similar things and asked if CBO's are involved in this work. Dr. Scarlett shared that they're working with CBO's to ensure their work is aligned with SPS Governance, as well as families and Building Leadership Teams. She thanked Dr. Pedroza for bridging that with the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), Family Engagement (FE), DREA, and Partnerships.

Director Geary asked about Homeroom, data capturing – is concerned our leaders are capturing data consistently – bad indicators may reflect on the building leaders and raised concern there may be data manipulation so they are left alone, not raise flags, etc. She asked if there are pockets failing that we’re not seeing? Specifically, on discipline and instructional time, restraint and isolation, etc. she wonders how sure the team is of our data. Dr. Jones explained that Wyeth Jesse is having some training on data entry – working on improving data collection especially around Special Education and discipline, noted that there is room for improvement. He also noted that Dr. Pedroza is relationship building so leaders will be more forthright, stressed a reliance on relationships *and* data.

Dr. Scarlett said they are focusing on data literacy within the Race and Equity (R&E) teams and at schools within school teams, R&E teams at schools need data training and then they can tie to professional development (PD) and building adult capacity. Further she reports UW has helped incorporate data from research to inform that work.

Director Harris asking about grant funding and goal funding running out, repurposing to strategic plan, and Dr. Jones said that they’ve raised millions and have been able to sustain the division through foundation money and noted Juneau has cache in community, and he hopes they’ll be able to leverage that.

Dr. Jones spoke about Key Performance Indicators and explained that their division is unique among large school districts, and that makes benchmarking not possible at this point. On policies and procedures, he reports the division stays with that framework and spoke to director questions about volunteer and taskforce member training. Training is not yet required for them, but the digital tool kit is employed in new hire onboarding.

More on the EOG digital tool kit – he spoke about implicit bias in work force equity, R&E analysis tools, training admins and people who greet families in buildings with respect to welcoming environment. He shared a slide on Looking Forward noting that the strategic plan is their beacon. The group had discussion around systemic implementation “it’s all about the action.”

Director Burke shared admiration for the team and leadership and the work that has been done, he appreciates a solutions-based approach, focusing on the right work, and also being able to adapt. Directors Patu and Harris also shared their thanks and appreciations. Director Geary shared her thanks for hard work and positive energy being the difference between another initiative and personal change, and talked about the importance of self-care.

Director Harris adjourned the meeting at 6:02p.m.