Equity Advisory Committee
Minutes

Date: 10/06/21
Time: 6:00-8:00PM
Location: Zoom

In Attendance
Eric Howard, Andrea Jayne, Jessie Harper, JP Claussen, Aala Basheir, Dasia Taylor, Rebecca Michaeli, Reyna Roach, Lulu Roarick, Brian Brandsmeier, Heidi Pierce, Caroline Barker, Laura Gray, Charlie Eastham, Ty Cruce, Paras Bassuk

Guests: Diane Schumacher, Maureen Beran, Doug Kollasch, Carmen Gwenigale, Viana Qadoura, Mollie Willis, Darcie Kress, Jazmin Batie, Jessica Andino, Krisha Kapoor, Dawn BarbouRoske, Jean Jordison

Agenda

I. **Check-In (5 minutes)**
   a. Review and Approve Minutes
      i. Jessie motion to approve, Caroline Seconded the motion. Motion Passed.
   b. Updates from committee members
      i. Andrea – Pride update. Laura, Brad, Carmen, Andrea, Charita, Dawn, and Jen all worked at the booth. It went very well and there was a huge turnout. ICCSD had a booth there and gave out information about our admin guidelines.
      ii. Rebecca Lulu Aala – City high update. All three are in the student senate and they are planning to have their first town hall event towards the end of the month. They talked to everyone at the student senate meetings and have about 40 people who have expressed that it would be helpful to have an adult there but not necessarily a teacher. These town halls will have a topic each month. Some topics students felt less comfortable with teachers present and for other topics, teachers are wanted so they can hear student voices and feedback. They have spoken to UAY to have representatives from there.
         1. The first meeting will function as an introduction. They are thinking the meeting will be on Thursday at 5:30. They want to do a presentation to introduce everyone and the faces of the district. This is heavily based on the lack of knowledge of those in the district. Students do not always
know how the school district works or who is a part of the
district. The first town hall will be explaining all of this.

2. Hoping to potentially do a few circles. Two goals, teach
everyone how to advocate for themselves and how they
can do this through the school district, and second to
make connections in the community.

3. Wanted to talk to the EAC for the meetings where
students do not want teachers present if there are any
members of the committee to attend or help facilitate
discussions.
   a. Dasia – Would love to participate. Will ask Paras if
      they are interested.
   b. Reyna – Can they be updated on this because they
      have not been able to attend student senate meetings.
   c. Eric – If you want to hold a school-sanctioned event
      you need to have a representative from the school
      district present because of liability. This doesn’t need
      to be a teacher but some sort of district employee.
   d. Heidi – Would the Omsbuds person be someone to
      consider?
      i. Rebecca – Yes, we have contacted her.
   e. Andrea – Will help if needed.

c. Prospective Member Introductions
   i. Dasia – Asks that prospective members share a little about
      themselves. Will have a timer of 2:00 to keep on schedule.
   ii. Prospective Committee members all shared information about
      themselves and their interest in joining the committee in 2:00
      minute increments.
      1. Dawn BarbouRoske
      2. Maureen Beran
      3. Jessica Andino
      4. Doug Kollasch
      5. Jean Jordison

II. Equity Department Update
   a. ELP Follow-Up Discussion – Diane Schumacher, Darcie Kress
      i. Darcie – Darcie is the new ELP Coordinator and is also new to the
district. She is learning a lot, and one thing that attracted her to
the district is the diversity. When she was doing her research for
her interview, she saw an interview video about Dasia and was
very excited about the district. Collectively the team has been
talking about ways of how to prioritize and focus in the first year
of their time together. They have been talking about the
importance of their programming, what they offer for students,
and making sure what they do is relevant and aligned to standards
by doing a curriculum audit. A huge part of this is bringing in inquiry and making things more students centered and student driven. They are doing some shifting and working in the curriculum area and looking at identification processes.

1. The district has an identification process already, but they are evaluating the alignment of this and are aware of the lack of diversity of the programming especially at the secondary level. Are looking at ways to identify students to participate. Has met with Jen Brinkmeyer for ways to broaden the scope of criteria while maintaining the nature of the program.

2. Are considering teacher recommendations as a way of identification. Would like to hear more about thoughts the committee has, and experiences members have had.

ii. Diane – Darcie, can you talk a little more about high school and your ideas about this? Also, we have a lot of resources for secondary level students such as AP courses and college prep, but we also know there are ways we can support our ELP students as well.

1. **Answer:** Darcie – Yes. She met with the high school counselors who have been charged as ELP contacts at each of the 3 larger high schools. We have discussed where they want to expand the program, and what their needs might be. They discussed differentiated resources. They want to offer some SEL Circle type work that counselors could regularly schedule meetings with their ELP students. Research says that these types of learners have a high risk of perfectionism and anxiety so this would help with this. We want to make sure we are supporting students that have deep passions in whatever field they have an area of interest. We have discussed having mentorship options and inviting guest speakers from the community as well.

2. There is a finite amount of funds to use for ELP, so we have to be fiscally responsible, but we are trying to be creative in the ways that we are using these funds.

iii. Diane – We have put some things in place in the last few years. It used to be that we would test students after a nomination from a teacher. Then we moved to a system where every student gets a screener at the secondary level, and we look at data to make sure that who we are reaching was representative of our demographics in the district. We’ve also put in enrichment programs in schools that had lower numbers to try to broaden the pool. We are putting in these initial efforts and are seeing better results at the
elementary level, and hope that we are moving in the right direction.

b. Feedback/Comments

1. Dasia – Does Tate have an ELP program?
   a. **Answer: Darcie** – We have talked about this and where we can go, and we discussed Tate. There is not currently anyone staffed at Tate, and that is something that we need to take a closer look at so we can broaden the resources we offer. She spoke with a teacher from Tate and talked about this issue, and the teacher said that they know of some students that might be a good fit for ELP, and they are finding ways to reach these students.

2. Dasia – In addition to the screening at the elementary level, what do the numbers look like for students of color in ELP? Is the problem retention? Are students of color at an elementary level just not transferring when they move to secondary?
   a. **Answer: Diane** – Doesn’t have the exact data but knows that we aren’t where we need to be. Doesn’t think it’s a retention problem but more of an identification problem. We were not as intentional about identification a few years ago, and we’ve just been implementing new strategies in the last few years, so the results have not caught up yet as the students are not yet in secondary. They have talked about doing another whole group screening in 6th grade where all students do the screening and do not need to be nominated.

3. Caroline – Is the only way to get into ELP in secondary a nomination? Is there not another screening in High School?
   a. **Answer: Diane** – Correct, there isn’t another whole screening, but students are able to apply, and we look at their grades and other aspects.
   b. Caroline – Thinks it would be good to consider another whole screening because some students may not know that this resource is available to them.

4. Dasia – Students don’t always know what ELP can offer but have also heard that what ELP is offering is not sufficient to that of a unique supportive advanced learning option. This is also something to be looked at on a secondary level.
a. Diane – We’ve had this conversation, and this is a challenge. We have so many great offerings at the high school level, so we don’t want to limit access and say that these options are only available to ELP. A lot of the time a lot of our ELP students do access these other options as well. We are trying to find ways to give ELP students things they specifically need that they aren’t getting elsewhere.

b. Darcie – Counselors don’t want ELP services to become an ethical dilemma. Whenever they decide what to offer, they think that this is also a resource that all students should have access to. They don’t like to exclude anyone or make it seem like ELP is a type of club. Really this should be needs-based, so we have to ask what ELP students need that is not currently provided to them through our other rigorous courses and extracurriculars. We have some conferences coming up at national and state conferences to get more resources and learn more about equitable identification and programming.

5. Heidi – Would like to say that people are being left out and thinks that using standardized tests have time and time again shown as something that should be reconsidered. Wonders if any teacher training is going on to help teach them how they can identify who could qualify for ELP?

6. Paras – It was mentioned that you could run into an ethical dilemma with ELP. Would say there is an inherent ethical dilemma when you run into things like quotas or standardized testing that don’t necessarily adequately recognize achievement or skill. You’ve mentioned how to get students to know about ELP or how to make it appealing. We’ve given some creative solutions before, having it be service-based or research projects that students are given time during the day to work on. These are some ways to serve some of our most gifted and brightest students that aren’t gatekeeping.

a. Darcie – We do not disagree with anything that anyone is bringing up tonight. We know that there are fundamental pieces of resources that every high school student should have, so we are working to identify things that can be specifically beneficial to ELP students. Our kids are so unique, and we don’t want to offer something that is a blanket band-aid that doesn’t
match what students need. What we offer should change year-to-year and she is interested in a service-based resource. We need to match kids up with their passions and get them the proper resources they need. We are still figuring this out.

7. Caroline – Thinks ELP needs to move away from college prep. This is a counselor’s job for all students and the idea that ELP equals college as a next step isn’t good. Focusing less on high education and more on enrichment right now or other options post-high school.

8. Jessie – Could you speak a little more about community involvement? Could you identify a short-term goal within the next 3 months and a long-term goal that would be within the year.

a. **Answer: Darcie** – At this point, it is an idea, but the counselors are sending out a survey to students currently identified as ELP students asking them what their interests are, not only college but career clustered. Then they discussed how to match them with community resources based upon their interests. Until we know what the student's needs and interests are and what they feel they would benefit from we don’t know exactly what they would look like. If you have suggestions that would be great. The broad goals are to change the identification system. A short-term goal we have is to help teachers move towards a more inquiry model. We are looking at early identification where we have a universal screener and talking about what this could look like at secondary age. We do not have a definitive timeline for this, but in the near future, we will have another universal screener for late elementary before Jr. High. Another immediate action is the send the previously mentioned survey out to gather student interests and want to do some circles with students.

9. Dasia – Paras, Caroline, and Dasia met with Diane over the summer and gave some ideas of what could be implemented at a secondary level. These were specific things that you could do outside of the traditional education track.

**III. Membership Outreach**

a. Feedback/Comments
i. Andrea – Because Paras is not here and this is an agenda item they added, it might be a good idea to table this item until the next meeting when they will be able to speak on it.

ii. Jessie – This item is in relation to outreach for the committee and advertisement.

IV. Indigenous Peoples Day

a. Feedback/Comments

i. Andrea – Update on what we are doing on the newsletter

ii. Reyna – Has some feedback on the land acknowledgment conversation we’ve had in the past. This has sometimes been seen as something we should not create without any material change in the district to support the indigenous communities as it can seem empty to not have a lot of implications that are amazing. In order to do a land acknowledgment that has a use, we need to do more work.

1. JP – What have other organizations done that are actionable. Are there ideas of where we can draw from?

   a. **Answer: Reyna** – Institutions have generally not been doing very good things with this. The only federally recognized tribe in Iowa is the Meskwaki which isn’t very close to us. We should be reaching out to the peoples whose land we are currently on to speak on this issue. Feels that what we need to focus on is education. We need to start at an elementary level educating about indigenous peoples. Recommendations are to reach out to the tribes and talk about indigenous history

      i. Andrea – Our district has purchased a new social studies curriculum called InquirED. Have met with Patrick Snyder who is the elementary Social Studies Coordinator about the rollout to teachers in this first year. The curriculum is much more robust has a focus on diversity. Can connect Reyna with Patrick if they would like more specifics.

   b. Caroline – One thing we can change is to have a day of learning or having speakers or presentations because we don’t have the school day off.

   c. Reyna – We could also try to have Indigenous Peoples Day off school and then we could recommend a lot of resources. We don’t have a lot of tribes in this area so we could recommend more webinars and resources from other areas.
i. **Answer: JP** – Now we have other days off such as Eid and this is all because of activism from the community. We are talking about having Lunar New Year off. The question to ask is would you rather have the day off or have a day of educational opportunity. This could be something to go to the board and superintendent with recommendations. We could also have a statement acknowledging this day.

d. Andrea – We are actively looking for resources for November if anyone on the committee has connections or resources – can put them on the newsletter and cultural curriculum resources.

e. Laura – Does not know if these groups do circles but we are looking to form a type of council to talk about restorative justice circles that will be implemented in the schools, and we’d love to touch base to get any feedback.

   i. **Answer: Reyna** – Doesn’t know if the groups in this area do restorative circles as they aren’t practiced by every tribe so isn’t sure what their practices are.

   ii. **Answer: Brian** – It might be helpful to consult with someone from the Meskwaki settlement school.

   iii. **Answer: Jessica** – The Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the City of Iowa City met with reps from multiple tribes in order to inform their land statement. Kevo Rivera was instrumental in that, and so was Ashley Lindley from the Human Rights Commission.

f. Dasia – How should we move forward with any action items? Would we like to present to the Superintendent or give recommendations to have a day off for Indigenous Peoples Day?

   i. **Answer: JP** - If it is more than that, the committee should decide the asks and then it can be presented to the board. If we are asking to have the day off that’s an easy ask.

g. Dasia – We could put together some asks for having Indigenous Peoples Day off, or what we want it to look like. We should also think about what that team should look like. We can put this on next month's agenda to talk about it further.
h. Caroline – We could make a subcommittee too if we want to meet in between meetings.

V. **Elections**
   a. Review submitted applications
      i. The committee has reviewed the application for Jean Jordison and is ready to vote on her application.
         1. Committee votes unanimously in favor. Motion passes to approve Jean Jordison for membership.

VI. **Check Out (10 Minutes)**

VII. **Adjourn**