

# Equity Advisory Committee Minutes



**IOWA CITY**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Child-Centered : Future-Focused

**Date:** 08/11/21

**Time:** 5:00-6:30pm

**Location:** Zoom

## **In Attendance:**

Eric Howard, Laura Gray, Andrea Jayne, Caroline Barker, Jayne Finch, Jessie Harper, Dasia Taylor, Lulu Roarick, Charlie Eastham, Brian Brandsmeier, Heidi Pierce, Reyna Roach, Ali Borger-Germann, Paras Bassuk

**Guests:** Jean Jordison, Theresa Biancheri

## **Agenda**

### **I. Check-In (5 minutes)**

- a. Review and Approve Minutes
- b. Updates from committee members
  - i. Suggestion to change the order of the agenda and move Collective Values and Guidelines, and Elections to the beginning of the meeting. Committee votes unanimously in favor.

### **II. Collective Values and Guidelines**

- a. Jayne – As this is her last meeting, the committee will take this meeting to “Reset”. Before Covid, the committee would have collective guidelines and values. These were developed in a Circle format, and we’d like to create new values and guidelines today.
- b. Feedback/Comments
  - i. Committee reviewed the previous values and guidelines and then in a Circle format created a new list.
  - ii. Motion by Lulu, seconded by Paras, all in favor. Collective Values will be sent out to the committee before the next scheduled meeting.

### **III. Elections**

- a. Jayne – We will need to elect Co-chairs and vice-chair. We decided a year ago to split the chair position into co-chairs, one adult, one student. You may nominate yourself, or you can nominate someone else. The duties of the chair are to develop the agenda every month, touch base with the equity team, work behind the scenes setting things up, and getting guests to come to the meeting. Chairs will talk to perspective and the position may involve some emailing. The vice-chair is there as backup if the chair is not present, and the vice-chair needs to step in.
  - i. Dasia – The co-chairs and vice-chair meet at least once a month to discuss the previous meeting.
- b. Co-Chairs –
  - i. Dasia – Will be continuing as a co-chair for the 2021-22 school year.
  - ii. Heidi – Nominates Paras as co-chair, seconded by Dasia
    1. Paras accepts the nomination. Committee votes unanimously in favor.

- c. Vice-Chair –
  - i. Brian – Nominates Lulu
    - 1. Lulu – accepts if there are no other nominations.
  - ii. Jayne – Nominates Jessie Harper. Seconded by Lulu.
    - 1. Jessie – Accepts nomination. Committee votes unanimously in favor.
- d. Misc Feedback:
  - i. Paras – Would like to revisit the voting structure of the committee (Robert’s Rules) as there are problems with their history. Suggests a new structure be discussed at the next meeting.
  - ii. Dasia – Would like to thank Jayne for her service as the Co-Chair and all the work she has done for the committee.

#### IV. Equity Department Update

- a. **Department Hires**
  - i. Janet Abejo-Parker will be the new Ombudsperson and she comes from the Cedar Rapids civil rights department. She has a lot of background in this and is going to be a great asset.
  - ii. Luke Dillon will be the principal for our online program, and assistant director of Equity.
  - iii. Brad Kelly will be the new RJ coordinator for the district.
  - iv. Charita – Will be now be the Equity Coordinator and will be handling bullying/harassment.
  - v. Andrea will be the new Equity Specialist and will take over grant writing for diversity initiatives.
  - vi. Cultural Proficiency Team has been disbanded and these resources have been changed to be more strategic. There will be Equity Ambassadors, 8 on the professional development end, and 8 on the RJ end who will assist on restorative justice.
- b. **RJ Initiative** – There will be 10 schools that RJ Circles will be rolled out this year. 6-5 Elementaries and 4 Secondary. We have hired Becky Mc[last name] to come and help with some professional development.
- c. **Admin fellows** – Came out of the **ESSER** dollars and was part of a grow-your-own model. These people were taken out of the district and will work as an administrator for 2 years. They will work with the principal and gain administrative experience. There were 13 fellows chosen for buildings and an ESC fellow. Part of this initiative is to help with diversity. 6 of the 14 identify as minority employees.
  - i. Carmen Gweningale is the new ESC Admin Fellow who is coming from Liberty. She has been heavily involved in Equity in the past with her work.
- d. **Senate/House File 802**
  - i. Laura Gray - Knows that teachers have many concerns about this bill. This bill does not have much to do with curriculum, and if looked at closely excludes curriculum. It is more so towards mandatory training. However, there are some parameters around not saying certain things like “systemic racism”. Teachers can teach the curriculum and about things like slavery without fear. Does not know any educators in our district that were trying

to make any group of students feel that they were responsible for racism. That has never happened in this district.

- ii. You can teach your curriculum, you can teach about slavery. Students can ask about anything and you can answer them honestly.
- iii. Feedback/Comments:
  - 1. Charlie – The board is scheduled to have a work session on HF 802 and other legislative matters on *September 14<sup>th</sup>*. Would members of this group be interested in attending this meeting? Work sessions typically do not have much public interaction, but this may be something the committee can represent with.
    - a. Answer: Laura – with cases increasing we may need to think about limiting how many people go to meetings, so it may be best to get a few representatives instead of having the entire committee go.
    - b. Answer: Jessie – There needs to be a member of the EAC representing this committee, volunteers to go.
    - c. Paras – A few months ago we formed a sub-committee on this bill, and we could start there to consolidate this work.
    - d. Committee members planning to attend – Jessie, Brian, HF 802 Subcommittee
  - 2. Heidi – Is it a problem if a teacher uses the terms “Systemic Racism” or “White Privilege”
    - a. Answer: Laura – It isn’t forbidden but you need to be careful about assigning traits to a particular group of people when discussing racism. There is guidance about how to talk about these issues without using these words. This is how the Diversity Department has always talked about these issues because Laura uses a restorative approach.
  - 3. Brian – Is interested in going to this meeting, and is very concerned about this bill. Would like some discussion and guidance from the school board about this.
  - 4. Paras – Would the board session be followed up by immediate communication to teachers about what was decided? Teachers are the ones that most need to hear this.
  - 5. Charlie – Personally would suspect that yes the administration would communicate to staff. They will also communicate to staff before the meeting as well as we progress. After this meeting when the committee has a chance to see what the board says, feedback will be important to how the board will move forward.
- iv. Eric – Put a link to the guidance given by the Department of Education, specifically discussing the guidance for curriculum discussion,
- v. Charlie – The board will eventually need to make decisions of how we will address this file, and this navigation will be expressed in various policies. When policies will be looked at, this committee will have the chance to give their opinion.

#### V. Member updates

- a. Reyna - Truth American reconciliation commission has made a Land Acknowledgement and suggests that ICCSD considers creating one of our own. There have been talks about celebrating Indigenous People's Day in the district and does not know what the committee can do to help with this.
  - i. Paras – The committee has agreed that the land acknowledgment should be done in a thorough and appropriate way.
- b. Paras – Would like to find ways for committee members to make connections in the community.
- c. Dasia – Jayne, Lulu, Dasia, Charlie, and Andrea went to the FMP 2.0 Feedback session for the district. This went well and the committee members who came were able to give a lot of feedback from the admins present.
  - i. Lulu – The committee discussed additional classroom space, language immersion, social-emotional learning, career-tech, and climate.
  - ii. Jayne – This meeting is an example of why accountability and being present at these opportunities are important.
    - 1. Paras – Really appreciates the opportunities that this committee has for meeting with the school board and with the administration. Wonders if it is possible to always give ample time for different events outside of regular meeting times.

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

- a. Meeting schedule –
  - i. Andrea- For the 2021-22 school year we will meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month.
  - ii. Lulu – Would like to push the meeting to 5:45 since it will be happening after school.
  - iii. Paras – If we keep the meeting time as it is and it doesn't work for students, is interested in working with Dasia for more ways for students to get involved.
    - 1. Jayne – The meeting time pre-pandemic used to be from 6-8 pm
    - 2. Jessie & Brian – Would also be fine with a 6-8 time.
  - iv. Committee votes to move the monthly meeting to 6 pm to 8 pm for the 2021-22 school year, the first Wednesday of the month over zoom. Committee votes unanimously in favor, motion passes.
- b. Brian – Suggests discussing creating equity committees at the secondary level again at the next meeting.

#### VII. Adjourn

- a. Reyna motions to adjourn, caroline seconded. Motion passed.