

MINUTES

Special Meeting of the

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
EQUITY COMMITTEE**
Corvallis School District 509J
1555 SW 35th Street
Corvallis, OR 97339

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Cathi Alden
Rae Delay
Cyrel Gable, Board Chair
Sara Gelser, Board Member
Deb Kadas
Lynn Lahey
Nell O'Malley, Board Member
Laverne Pitts
Blake Rodman
Marc Rosegold
Anne Schuster
James Wickman

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Kathy Rodeman, Business Manager
Jeanne Holmes, Assistant to Superintendent
Jim Ford, Superintendent
Dawn Tarzian, Director of Teaching and Learning
Kim Patten, Recorder

I. INTRODUCTION

Jeanne Holmes welcomed the committee. She reviewed the agenda, the committee's charge, and reminded them of the ladder of inference.

The committee discussed concerns about the composition of the committee. Concerns were expressed that staff were not adequately represented. Jeanne Holmes explained that the Board and the Administrators who made recommendations for committee members intended that building principals would represent staff from their grade levels. After lengthy discussion, Cyrel Gable, Board Chair made

the recommendation that we add a second staff representative and notify staff and the community on where minutes can be found and how to send input to the committee; the committee agreed.

II. FOLLOW-UPS FROM LAST MEETING

There were discussions about community input. The entire committee agreed that they would prefer written input. All input should be addressed to the committee, care of Jeanne Holmes. If any committee member receives written input, they will forward it to Jeanne for distribution to the committee.

Jeanne Holmes presented the following definition of “equity” to the committee based on the committee’s discussions at our last meeting. *“All students have access and are held to, and are supported to achieve a rigorous, high standard of learning.”* The committee asked for more information on what “Access” refers to relating to civil rights legislation.

The committee reviewed the handouts distributed at the beginning of the meeting including Free and Reduced Lunch Information since 1992/93, State SES Ranking Over Time, Reasons for Transfer Requests for 2003-04, Average Teacher Salaries by School, Budget Allocation and Weighting Method, Budget Summary, Grants based on poverty for 2002-03, and Enrollment Projections. Kathy Rodeman explained the factors used to build a budget for each school and the services that are funded centrally.

III. OPEN ENROLLMENT

The committee discussed their reflections on the articles they have read. Discussion centered on the idea of what role schools should play in the community and what is the responsibility of schools. (See Attachment A)

Reactions and observations about the transfer policy and data were shared. It was noted that there has been a recent shift in high school students wanting to attend Corvallis High School instead of Crescent Valley High School, and the committee discussed the possible factors. Committee members pointed out that differences in kindergarten programs at each elementary school appear to help determine decisions for many families. (See Attachment B)

IV. NEXT STEPS

Jeanne Holmes asked the committee to review the open enrollment policy for our next meeting on December 4, 2003. She would like the committee to be prepared to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats created by the policy.

Attested to by:

Cyrel Gable, Board Chair

Prepared by: Kim Patten

Attachment A

Reflections on Readings

- Bolder Valley, Colorado mirrors our situation.
- Global Question – What is the responsibility of schools / districts in engaging with social engineering?
- Is competition a good thing? It ignores the social problems exacerbated in our economy. It puts the ownership on the teachers only.
- What is the role of schools? Can we maintain neighborhood schools? Does our policy give high SES families the ability to abandon low SES neighborhood schools?
- How far do we socially engineer? Do we end up with exact percentages at each school? Is that over-correcting? Is bussing an equity issue?
- Research says students do better in a more successful school.
- “Class” issue is more the issue than race.
- The trend is away from minority to economic desegregation which is a bigger issue for Corvallis.
- In addition to race and class, we also need to look at the segregation of disabled students and ESL students– we put them all in one classroom at magnet schools.
- Teachers think the mix of students in their classroom is crucial. Motivated students provide peer role model.
- The mix at Lincoln does not provide peer role models who excel. The middle of the road is what students strive for.
- The responsibility of the school district is to prepare people to live in the world. School is one of the last places this occurs.

Attachment B

Issues and Questions

Transfer Policy

- Do we need to revisit dates for open enrollment?
- Do we need to reserve spaces for NCLB related transfers?
- Leave room for neighborhood families so they don't have to go to another school
- Transferred forever or just one year?
- Class size numbers in cap part
- Narrowing frame of open enrollment windows
- "Transfer forever"
- Get Franklin back in centralized loop "SES"
- More information about options

Transportation

- Do we have equity of access?

Open Enrollment Policy

- Does a school's size compromise its ability to offer comprehensive education to all students?
- Does open enrollment create competition between schools? Is competition bad?
- Original idea of open enrollment was to place kids in learning environment that best met their needs, parent satisfaction, involvement, and keep students in public school system – Did we over-correct?
- Have we created diversity imbalances that are harming kids?
- Decisions based on perception?
- Have we really created enough to choose between? – original vision
- SES in lottery?