

Madison Metropolitan School District
Madison, Wisconsin

Art Rainwater, Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes for EQUITY TASK FORCE
February 12, 2007

Doyle Administration Building, Room 103
545 West Dayton Street
Madison, Wisconsin

Lisa Cuevas provided an update on the health of Christa Bruhn. She will e-mail members the address where Christa can be reached and noted she can receive e-mail messages.

The Equity Task Force reached a quorum and was called to order by Jack Jorgensen at 6:45 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Cohen, Lisa Cuevas, Paul Kusuda, Thomas Mertz, Glenn Parks, Wendy Sauve, Beth Swedeen, Jackie Woodruff

MEMBERS ABSENT: Christa Bruhn, Rafael Gomez, Tiffany Jones, Zina Knox, Toya Robinson, Matt Silvern

STAFF PRESENT: Jack Jorgensen, Kathleen Lyngaas, Ann Wilson – Recording Secretary

1. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Thomas Mertz and seconded by Wendy Sauve to approve the minutes of the Equity Task Force meeting dated January 29, 2007. Paul Kusuda offered an amendment (accepted as friendly) to include a notation that the Task Force received information about the illness of member Christa Bruhn. The motion to approve the minutes as amended was unanimously carried by those present.

2. Final Review and Adoption of Equity Task Force Report to Board of Education

(Written materials provided in advance: Equity Task Force Final Report draft dated February 12, 2007. Written materials provided at the meeting: Attachment A: Equity Task Force Meeting Notes for May 22, 2006; Attachment B – Summary/Analysis of Community Input Received – all attached to the original copy of these minutes.)

Editorial changes were made to the draft of the final report during the meeting. The larger changes were:

- Jack Jorgensen and Kathy Lyngaas will reword the third paragraph under Background Information so that it puts appropriate focus on the materials and topics reviewed. Equity-related papers and policies should be listed first, the resources/allocation materials consolidated, and topics such as climate, expectations, attitudes, concepts, beliefs, and values included.
- This statement was added to follow the Responsibility Chart on page 4: *All associated with the MMSD are charged with furthering equity.*
- The items under C. Monitoring and Evaluating Outcomes of Equity Efforts by MMSD were re-ordered (number three was moved to number 1).

Any additional suggested changes such as punctuation or spelling errors should be given to Jack or Kathy as soon as possible.

DISCUSSION:

- In the Strategies to Achieve Equity, under Engagement, *Charge the Special Assistant to the Superintendent for Race and Equity with continually assessing implementation of this policy.* Discussion about aligning this statement with the contents of the draft policy as written by Legal Counsel. The policy draft gives responsibility to the Superintendent and/or his/her designee. No change was made in the Task Force report.

There were no changes to Attachment A (Equity Task Force Meeting Notes May 22, 2006) as presented. A sentence was added to the second paragraph of the opening statement in Attachment B (Summary/Analysis of Community Input Received): *A complete set of responses may be viewed upon request.*

There was a suggestion to add to the Addendum a blanket statement that the Board of Education should consider seeking wide and extensive input from the community, beyond that gathered by the Task Force, but no action was taken.

It was moved by Glenn Parks and seconded by Beth Swedeen to approve the Task Force Report as edited at this meeting. Motion unanimously carried by those present.

3. *Proposed Equity Policy*

(Written materials provided in advance of the meeting: Draft Equity Policy – attached to the original copy of these minutes.)

Jack Jorgensen stated that he discussed the draft policy with Attorney Clarence Sherrod who asked that he bring attention to areas where the draft policy differs from the Task Force report:

- a) In the draft policy, *With respect to Engagement, the Board and employees of the District shall:...expect the Superintendent and/or his/her designee to be responsible for the continual assessment and implementation of this policy.* In their report, the Task Force recommended this be the responsibility of the Special Assistant to the Superintendent for Race and Equity.
- b) The Guiding Principles appear near the beginning of the policy. (They appear close to the end in the Task Force report.) It is common practice to include guiding principles in the beginning of a policy statement to provide context and strengthen later work.

Attorney Sherrod requested feedback from the Task Force about any points in the draft policy that they could “not live with.” Task Force members commended Attorney Sherrod for the excellent manner in which he interpreted and translated the Task Force report into policy language.

It was moved by Jackie Woodruff and seconded by Wendy Sauve to approve the Draft Equity Policy as presented. Motion unanimously carried by those present.

4. *Plan for Presentation of the Final Report and Proposed Policy to the Board of Education*

COMMENTS/DISCUSSION:

- Would like Board members to receive all written materials at least two weeks in advance.
- Is the expectation that Task Force members will be present when the Board of Education gathers feedback? Members have indicated willingness to be part of that process.
- Work of the Task Force is finished when the report is submitted to the Board of Education. The Board of Education may make changes or ask for input, but the Task Force is no longer responsible. Will be important for Task Force members to be present when the report is presented to the Board of Education.
- View the presentation to the Board of Education as perhaps a semi-formal presentation; more of an opportunity for them to ask questions. There was a greater need to go through the information when the interim report was presented because the Task Force was interested in knowing whether Board members felt they were headed in the right direction.
- Co-chairs should present the Report and Task Force members remain in the audience (unless invited by Board members to be on the stage) and be available to answer questions if addressed. The responsibility of the Task Force was to formulate the report, the responsibility of Legal Counsel was to convert the report to policy, and the responsibility of the Board of Education is to review the Report. The authority to present the report lies with the co-chairs and the work of the Task Force is completed.
- A recent trend for presentation of a report to the Board of Education is that the chair makes the presentation with questions sometimes referred to committee members as appropriate.
- The document is the group's work. Everyone is familiar and could speak. See no problem if all members wish to make presentation.
- Board may expect informal interaction.
- Primary presentation should be the policy, secondary part is the Task Force report. The Board of Education will find the work of the Task Force (meeting the charge) in the report and converted to the policy statement.
- Heard that the Board will not apply the equity policy during the budget process; that it will be indirectly applied as in the last couple of years.

Board Member Ruth Robarts walked through the room at this point to retrieve her coat. When asked her viewpoints about how the presentation might be made, she commented that it is good to receive written materials ahead of time, it helps to organize the reading process by having an executive summary, and the presentation method chosen should reflect a balance between providing information to the Board/public and using the time with the Board to address the issue.

Jack Jorgensen and Kathy Lyngaas will initiate the process of getting the presentation scheduled for a Board of Education meeting, preferably before the Budget is presented. Jack and Kathy will write a short cover memorandum to accompany the Report with Attachments and the Draft Policy. Regarding the presentation, Jack Jorgensen summarized the consensus of the group that the co-chairs would make relatively short statements about the overall process; acknowledge the work completed; that it represents a complex, challenging task; that the outcome is one the members feel good about; and to extend appreciation to past and present members of the Task Force and Attorney Sherrod for a job well done. It was requested that, as the Board members go through the policy, they do it section by section taking questions about that section as they go, and then move to the Report.

5. ***MMSD Resource Allocation Formula***

(Written materials provided at the meeting: Draft Equity Policy dated 1/31/05 – attached to the original copy of these minutes.)

COMMENTS/DISCUSSION:

- Based on discussion with the Board last time (interim report), there is an expectation that allocation be discussed as part of the report. Should appear in the context of discussion of current policy and practice. Belongs in the addendum of the report.
- Feel the group was asked to address allocation. Community is interested – certainly the north and east sides and those areas with middle and high schools above the district average in poverty rates.
- Legal Counsel, in 2005, drafted an equity policy that includes an equity resource formula. Not sure if Board of Education is willing to codify an index, or a policy with an index. Method/index does not need to be specific in the policy; how it should be done is up to the administration. Formula is important when cuts are being made in budgets – resources need to be taken away in an equitable fashion. Will be a time when finances are better; still need equitable resources based on student needs. Will be good to include a formula in the policy. Previously, formula has only been applied to supplemental; needs to be on the base.
- Has to be a base that every student receives. Comes down to class size. Need ratio between base and supplemental.
- Discussion is not appropriate to this Task Force. Suggest to the Board of Education that a task force be appointed for this specific issue, with district-wide representation. Board of Education will have the responsibility to consider the findings of the task force; they do not have that authority or incentive if the question is addressed by this Equity Task Force.
- No chance that a task force would be appointed to look at the equity formula in the current climate. Including an addendum in the report at least acknowledges the issue.
- There is already a formula; a change to the formula is not being proposed; want it included in the policy so that it has to be used. There are inequities in how resources are given and how the formula is being used.
- "Side-deals" occur within the language of the current policy; formula is not part of that.
- Could be included under monitoring and evaluating outcomes of equity – look at the formulas and see if they are being applied equitably, and why? Another measure of outcome; something is in place, but being questioned.
- Range of supplemental allocations is from .5 to 1.5 per school. Ranges in poverty among schools cannot be accommodated; much wider. Building administrators decide how to use supplemental allocations. High poverty means less opportunity – need allocation for services, not something extra (social worker vs. choral teacher).
- What is the rationale for the practice and why it is implemented as it is?
- As available supplemental allocation is decreasing, there is less to apply the formula to, less effect on schools.
- A combination of including a statement in the addendum and recommending a task force be appointed bolsters support for the first and gives greater burden to the Board to do something – one or the other.

Based on the discussion, Jack Jorgensen identified three options for addressing whether/how resources or allocation should be addressed:

Option 1 – Add an item to the Addendum that makes reference to the use of allocation formulas (ERF Equity Resource Formula; supplemental) and recommendations that it be codified and used to evaluate outcomes.

Option 2 – Recommend that a task force be appointed to examine the existing allocation formulas and process and make recommendations to the Board of Education for improvement (align with Equity policy). Composition should represent a blend of community members and school district staff and include those with expertise and those with interest.

Option 3 – Combination of both Options 1 and 2

Another option would be for the Board to direct the administration to examine existing equity resource formulas, align them with the equity policy, and make recommendations.

Task Force members voted (show of hands) for the three options listed.

Option 1 – no votes

Option 2 – one vote (Paul Kusuda)

Option 3 – seven votes (all present except Paul Kusuda)

Jack Jorgensen and Kathy Lyngaas will draft a statement, e-mail it to all Task Force members, (U.S. mail to those who do not receive e-mail), and seek agreement on the statement. It will then be included in the Addendum.

The Task Force will meet for a short time just before the scheduled presentation of the Report to the Board of Education to review the finalized documents and to prepare for the presentation.

6. *Adjournment*

It was moved by Thomas Mertz and seconded by David Cohen to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. Motion unanimously carried by those present.