

Board Equity and Inclusion Committee meeting

Tuesday, May 9, 2023 12:00 PM

Virtual Via Zoom

1. Call to Order

1.A. Board goals assigned to the Equity and Inclusion Committee

1.A.1. Identify statutory and legislative priorities for engaging legislators and community partners to develop meaningful advocacy for MESD students and communities.

1.A.2. Ensure inclusion through implementing our equity lens to achieve equitable district outcomes

1.B. Strategic Plan goals tied to the Equity and Inclusion Committee

1.B.1. Creating a high quality learning experience for all

1.B.2. Operationalizing systems that engage and empower communities

1.B.3. Building a culturally responsive workforce

2. Review minutes from the April 6, 2023 meeting

3. Action steps for the 2022-2023 Board goals assigned to the Equity and Inclusion Committee

3.A. Continue discussion on identified gaps and determine tangible actions

Board Equity and Inclusion Committee

Thursday, April 6, 2023

2023-2028 Agency Goals

#1 – Creating a high-quality learning experience for all

#2 – Operationalizing systems that engage and empower communities

#3 – Building a culturally responsive workforce

MESD Board Equity Lens-<https://www.multnomahesd.org/board-equity.html>

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 6, 2023 by Committee Chair Ying.

• CALL TO ORDER

Present: Helen Ying, Chair
Renee Anderson, Board member
Samuel Henry, Board member

Absent: Denyse Peterson, Board member

Administration: Sascha Perrins, Assistant Superintendent
Heather Severns, Board Secretary
Reiko Williams, Director of Regional Equity Initiatives and Partnerships

Guests: Joy Koenig, Principal, Three Lakes High School
Christine Otto, Senior Educational Services Administrator
Joni Tolon, Senior Program Administrator

1. Review notes from the March 2 meeting- The committee approved the minutes from the March 2 meeting.
Christine gave a short review of the presentation she gave at the March meeting.

2. Action steps for the 2022 Board goals assigned to the Equity and Inclusion Committee
Continue discussion on identified gaps and determine tangible actions.

A) Youth Corrections Facilities-Joy Koenig, Principal at Three Lakes High School in Albany joined the committee meeting to talk about programs happening within the YCEP in Albany and Florence. Joy is overseeing four high schools within MESD, three of them are youth corrections, incarcerated or pre-adjudicated and adjudicated students. There are students that are in a jail, students who might be in prison, and students who might be in what we would call a half-way house as an adult. Joy also has one detention (jail) program that serves pre-adjudicated youth. This program serves Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties. The fourth site Joy is overseeing is Camp Florence in Florence, Oregon. They are closely connected with the community and have partnerships in that area.

Joy is also the director of VESoy (Vocational and Educational Services of Older Youth). These are students ages 18-24. They do onsite and online college courses every term.

College students have access to college classes and high school students have access to college and high school classes so they can get dual credit.

Three Lakes High School is located at Oak Creek Correctional Facility in Albany and serves all of the female and non-binary youth who are incarcerated in Oregon. Students are there because the judge has convicted them. Staff at Three Lakes welcome and honor the students and want to hear their story and to understand why they are there. They also want to serve the students, fix the educational gaps and help them progress at a rapid manner, both academically and vocationally. All students are treated as if they have an IEP so they all have differentiated instruction. Class sizes are small, average is five. The largest class size at Three Lakes right now is 15. This is a college class, writing 121, taught by Dr. Ramycia McGee who is a Black Literature Dr. at Linn Benton Community College.

When Joy started at Three Lakes eight years ago there were only two certifications students could get and both were different types of work crew. They now have 38 certifications. There is a fabrication lab, a Nail Tech program, heavy equipment operation simulator, and many other opportunities.

The Special Education teacher at Three Lakes suggested that they move students from an IEP to a 504 as they leave the program. That involves ADA accommodations and accessibilities and it's much more honored.

Joy shared a snapshot of Special Education data from her program with the Committee.

Three Lakes High School (TLHS) (Youth Corrections Program)

- About 28%, or 8 of our students, are on IEPs. Of the 28% that are on an IEP, they all came to us with IEPs from other schools. Currently, there is no one under evaluation for an IEP.
- About 31%, or 9 of our students, are on 504s. Of the 31% that have 504s, five of them have enrolled with 504s from other schools and the other four have been evaluated and found eligible while enrolled with TLHS (MESD)
- Currently, there are two students being evaluated for a 504.

Riverside High School (RS) (Jackie Winters Transition Program/Youth Corrections)

- 25% of our 8 students, i.e., two youth, have IEPs. One has an IEP which was initialized from their previous school district, and one was found to be eligible while attending RS.
- 37% of our 8 students, i.e. three youth, have 504s. Two being initialized from their previous school district, and one is from Riverside.

Ocean Dunes (Youth Corrections Transition Program)

- 14% of our 7 students, i.e. one youth has an IEP which was initialized from their previous school district. Currently, there is no one under evaluation for an IEP.

- 14% of our 7 students has a 504, initialized from our district. One student was on an IEP from their previous district and re-entered the general education environment with a 504 since they graduated.

Ponderosa Creek (Juvenile Detention Program)

- 57% of our currently enrolled seven students, i.e., four of them are 504s and one is on an IEP. All were initialized from their previous school district.
- So far in the 2022-23 school year, out of 128 students at Ponderosa Creek, 48% i.e., 56 of them were on IEPs and 8%, i.e. 10 of them were on 504s. Four IEPs were received out of date and one was an out of state in which we renewed under Oregon Eligibility and annual IEP team meeting.

B) What information do Judges have access to? This was discussed at a previous meeting. Committee Chair Helen Ying connected with Barbara Marcille, a Trial Court Administrator in a circuit court in the Fourth Judicial District in the Multnomah County court system to find out what kind of data is being collected and how are they using this data in their work. Barbara went through the steps from when someone is charged through the entire process. In response to Helen's questions about data Barbara Marcille sent Helen the following information.

“A judge hearing a pending delinquency matter has information about the youth in the case based on the reports provided to the court, but the information is confidential in a juvenile case and we don't have aggregate demographic statistics such as race, ethnicity, language spoken, housing status, or level of school completed for those cases.

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court judges are working with the Oregon Judicial Department's Juvenile Delinquency Improvement Program to review and assess Oregon's juvenile court policies and practices to support the Juvenile Delinquency Improvement Program in creating recommendations for improvements in policies and practices.

One of the goals of the Juvenile Delinquency Improvement Program is to update the statewide business processes for juvenile delinquency cases, so that we can more easily provide reports and statistics that would be helpful for courts and systems partners. The Oregon Judicial Department plans to develop a data dashboard once we determine what measures need to be prioritized. The group has begun reviewing and updating the delinquency business processes and hopes to have more clear statistics and reports as soon as possible. This work is taking place statewide, not just Multnomah County and I'm including a link to the information about a national project this work is based on: Courting Judicial Excellence in Juvenile Justice-a 50 State Study (oregon.gov).”

Based on what has been shared, right now the judges are not looking at the information that we are hoping they see. It looks like they are trying to gather the information that would be helpful for the judges.

Helen is in the process of setting up another meeting with Susan Svetkey who is the Chief Family Court Judge so she can learn more from her. She asked the group about what they think the best next steps would be.

- Christine Otto recommended to get people out of their silos and into the same space so they can have shared conversations and create collaboration for our communities. Engage in conversation around shared learning with people who have this data and are using the data around this topic. Added to this is paying attention to where our work intersects with theirs.
- Helen Ying asked what the group thought about making an appointment to meet with Susan Svetkey, Chief Justice of Family Court. They were fine with this.
- Samuel Henry suggested looking at the Dashboard report from the Oregon Commission on Children and Families. It might be helpful to look back at what has been done in this area. Assistant Superintendent Perrins will look into this and see what he can find.

C) Misidentification and over identification of students in Special education and how they end up in a more restrictive setting - Reiko Williams let the committee know that she and

Timothy Rodgers, Principal at Arata and Burlingame Creek, Noa Martinsen, principal of Knott Creek, and Akanee Siyufy, School Psychologist at Knott Creek will be presenting on this topic at the OAESD conference in May. Students of color, typically black males, are over identified as emotionally disturbed. Students are being referred to MESD programs that may not have the correct identification. When the teacher does not have the skill or capacity to manage the student then that student continues to spend less and less time in that teacher's classroom and get on a pathway to a more restrictive environment and eventually home instruction. We are going to start conducting empathy interviews in May and listening to our students about their experiences.

Joni Tolon let the group know that Creeks students rarely go on home instruction. We have had great success at the Creeks programs. She said one of the things that often causes these children to have these behaviors in the first place is that inability to see the trauma that the child has gone through and that this behavior is the child's language that they are using to indicate trauma. Could this type of support be offered to younger students at their home schools? General Education teachers might have a lack of training to see some of the subtle factors for higher level autism and some other characteristics. It would be wonderful if we could work with our general ed school districts and those teachers on how to support children that are struggling with escalation of behaviors.

Marifer Sagar brought up culture and language. When she was at Portland Public Schools they created a multicultural family tool for special education that will explain the process and the different categories of the services.

Sascha Perrins spoke to the group about a team MESD built a few years ago that would push into the regular ed classroom with a Creeks type teacher. The regular ed teacher could learn strategies from them. Joni Tolon gave more detail about this program. It is still

happening but there is no money behind it. We have to pull staff from their regular duties to participate in this team.

Helen asked Joni Tolon to walk the team through the IEP process, and how can we do the work differently so they are not misidentified.. Joni let the group know that there were 13 different categories within special education that a child could be identified. Based on that they look at the child and their academics and their behavior and determine what is best for the child. For the child's individualized plan each of the goals is based on what the data supports and then based on the data the goals are created, they are written in the IEP and then depending on what areas that the child might be struggling with those would be the areas that are focused on. Direct instruction is vital to this, it can be in small groups and in individual settings. Accommodations and modifications are included, those might be areas that are focused on such as the need of sensory, whether that is over stimulation of the child is attempting to gain something. This is called a functional behavior assessment. They look at where the student's strengths and areas of development are. Parents are engaged before the IEP is crafted, this is required. Feedback is collected from the parents on what they want for their child, where do they see as areas of concern, and are there areas they feel we can maximize for the strengths based process.

Discussion was held on how IEPs are written so that they are centered around a student and done in a way so that everyone in the room understands the language. Joni believes that many times language is not written for families but instead for staff that work in acronyms. She would definitely support a culturally responsive shake up. IEPs should be written so that everyone can understand what is being asked, where we are headed, how will we know when we get there, and what will we need to do next. Helen asked how we begin to address this? How do we help general education teachers do IEP's in a more culturally responsive manner and have language that is more commonly understood. What are the next tangible steps? Joni shared what we support at MESD. We have Special Education TOSA's who go over the special education teachers IEPs and give comments and notes on what is not clear and comments such as "What did you mean by this?", to try and break down to as clear of language in a simple way as possible. Another thing that is helpful is that a draft of the IEP is sent to the family so they may digest what has been seen in the child at school and what other areas does the family want to add or what do they think might need to be more supported? This IEP timeline was created six years ago and has served us well. It allows the parent not to feel rushed and to give us feedback. Marifer Sagar suggested that one strategy from communications we can use is the use of plain language for any template or form and then translate them into the most common languages across the districts. If we are doing something well at MESD we should be sharing it with them.

Helen asked Joni Tolon to come back to this committee meeting in May. She believes this conversation is just getting started and really wants to have some tangible next steps. We need to spend more time looking at what we are doing and how we can improve. Helen also would like to see how we can influence our component districts.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned 2:29 p.m. The next meeting of this committee will be May 9 at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Severns

Executive Assistant/Board Secretary