

Board Equity and Inclusion Committee meeting

Thursday, December 5, 2024 1:00 PM

Virtual Via Zoom

1. Call to Order

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

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

1.A.2. Continue to focus and prioritization of regional leadership around equity

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 October 3, 2024 meeting and report on action items

3. Diverse vendor policy/status update

Board Equity and Inclusion Committee

Thursday, October 3, 2024

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, October 3, 2024 by Committee Chair Anderson.

• CALL TO ORDER

Present: Renee Anderson, Committee Chair
Denyse Peterson, Board member
Helen Ying, Board member

Absent: None

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

Guests: None

- 1. Review notes from the June 26 meeting-** The committee approved the minutes from the June 26 meeting.
- 2. Update on how we are doing with the Equity in Contracting Policy.** MESD Director of Regional Equity Initiatives and Partnerships Reiko Williams let the committee know that we have been in communication with our Business Department to explore how we can get baseline data about our contracts. Right now, they do not collect specific data like we do for new hires. Currently we send out a request for gender, race, ethnicity and veteran status to our new hires and it is optional whether people send it back. Therefore, we do not have baseline data on contracts, and who and how to identify those. Reiko and Business Services staff member Joshua Miniweather have come up with a sort of request for additional information which would be baseline but keeping in mind that the people we contract with its optional.

Reiko let the committee know that every time her department contracts with a vendor, typically for food, they use businesses of color. They have developed a database of businesses of color that they use so every contract or purchase they make is with businesses of color for vending and events. Their objective is to create a process organizationally that invites people to consider when they are making contracts that they take the step of consulting this data base and use businesses of color when possible.

Another step we are taking is training our Administrators at our monthly meetings. They have all been provided with the diverse vendor database so they can be intentional about who they are spending their dollars. The Administrators have also been provided with the Mercatus website, this is a business directory for BIPOC businesses.

Tiffany Penson, the People and Culture Manager for the City of Portland met with our Business Services Team as we were trying to understand what we could do about tracking our equity in contracting. She suggested that we do an audit to see where there were gaps in terms of purchasing. This is a huge undertaking, and was an expensive project for the City of Portland.

In response to the committee's question about the diverse vendor policy we are working with Business Services to implement a tool for when we hire or contract with new vendors to invite them to tell us, because we cannot mandate that they tell us who they are. The other thing that we can do, and the Equity Department is willing to do, is to look at businesses that we contract with and do some research to find out for our own baseline data. Who are the businesses, because they may not be in the MWSBE Directory or have one of those designations but still be a business of color. Businesses have to go through a process that is not easy in order to be designated as an MWSB.

Committee member Helen Ying asked what we have done to engage with minority communities and when will we receive a formal report on the progress on this policy that was adopted in July of 2020.

Assistant Superintendent Sascha Perrins emphasized that Reiko has been sharing a list of diverse vendors with staff throughout the agency and thanked her for putting that list together. In response to Helen's questions about engaging with minority community members and receiving a report on the progress of this policy he believes these items live in the strategic plan. Goal 2 is about community outreach and engagement and Goal 3 is about hiring and trying to get our ratio of people of color to match our students. There will be a report on all three goals of the strategic plan at the October Board meeting. Helen asked if there would be targeted reporting on the specific things as in this particular policy. Sascha let her know that we can create a report that more explicitly answers the questions in this policy. He also mentioned that for our large contracts there is a legal framework around amounts of money that are spent and the bidding process over a certain amount. We are required by law to pick the lowest of the three bids.

Committee Chair Renee Anderson asked if departments are asked to report on which vendors they use and if they are using vendors of color? Reiko responded that at our first Administrators meeting of the year Administrators were asked to complete a survey to tell us who they have contracted with. That does not mean that it's going to be a comprehensive or representative list because they may be new hires and may not know all of the contracts. We have this data but Business Services will be a big part of this because they see all the contracts. Right now we need to figure out how to get baseline data. At the moment, Business Services does not collect data on race and ethnicity so we are working to implement a process where we can begin to understand who we are contracting with.

Action: Sascha and Reiko will work together on getting the data.

Note: Board members are welcome to send in suggestions for diverse caterers. They will need to keep in mind policy [BBFE-Board Member Ethics and Conflict of Interest](#). Recommendations for diverse caterers may not bring the Board member any financial benefit.

3. Measurement tool and metrics to gauge progress made on the October 2022 Equity Audit findings. Reiko Williams walked the committee through the [October 2022 Equity Audit Findings](#). The Leadership Academy collected stakeholder perspective through nine focus groups across the agency. These focus groups were conducted with the following stakeholder groups:
 - a. Administrators of Color
 - b. Educational Assistants of Color
 - c. Equity & Inclusion Advancement Committee members
 - d. New Employees of Color
 - e. Students of Color
 - f. School Health Assistants of Color
 - g. Teachers of Color
 - h. Tenured Employees of Color

Themes emerged in the audit around how staff describe MESD's beliefs values and assumptions around diversity, equity and inclusion and in what ways they see those impacting how the organization operates. Staff largely said that they see that diversity, equity and inclusion are prioritized but that they would like to see more actions taken to help make those priorities a reality. Those kind of sentiments are also reflected in our Employee Satisfaction Survey, there is feedback from staff that they understand that it is an organizational priority but that they would like to see more evidence that it touches everybody in the organization.

Reiko mentioned some of the opportunities that staff have for engagement in equity with the monthly film series, the Energy in Equity Summit coming up on October 23rd and the November 1st is an MESD wide day of equity focused professional learning.

A discussion around staff training on bullying and harassment took place. This is something that staff are required to be trained on each year. The idea of working with the Communications department to put up posters with a QR code that would take you to the complaint policy and procedure was discussed as well.

4. Review Equity and Inclusion Committee Working Agreements for 2024-2025. Committee members were fine with the meeting date and time as well as the goals for 2024-2025.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned 2:00 p.m. The next meeting of this committee will be need to be surveyed as the original date on 11/7 lands on the OSBA

Convention that many members are attending. A survey will go out via email shortly to identify a new date.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Severns

Executive Assistant/Board Secretary

Multnomah Education Service District

Code: DJCB
Adopted: 7/21/20

MESD Policy on Increasing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Contracting, Procurement and Funding

The purpose of this policy is to increase wealth distribution in the economic spectrum.

The MESD serves a vulnerable population unlike other school districts, and understands that its students learn in many ways through specifically designed curriculum for their learning abilities. It is important that staff who teach, lead, empower and mentor be reflective of the student population served. The MESD's role is to build confidence in its students and fully prepare them for a future of self-sufficiency and independence by modeling diversity, equity and inclusion for them.

This policy, rooted in the greater Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Plan, is a tool for the MESD to meet its commitments to create broader community engagement and increase contracting with the Minority, Women, and Emerging Small Business (MWESB) community and other underrepresented communities.

Create Broader Community Engagement

The Board believes that broadening community engagement will further develop relationships that allow Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work to take root. The Board hereby commits to developing broad, equity-centric relationships through engagement with the MWESB community and other underrepresented communities.

The Board therefore authorizes the Superintendent to engage with minority communities to:

- Publicize information about the MESD, its mission, its needs and its opportunities in diverse, community-focused media outlets.
- Network with and, develop partnerships with, offer expertise to and collaborate with the MWESB community.
- Collaborate to develop a Scholarship program for underrepresented MESD students furthering their Education following High School.

Additionally, the Board therefore urges the Superintendent to engage with MESD employees to:

- Encourage volunteerism from parents and business partners in MESD programs,
- Offer job opportunities to minorities, women and disabled veterans, and
- Review contracts, including labor agreements, to foster living wage agreements.

Increase Contracting Opportunities for the MWESB Community

To deepen the MESD's commitment, The Board hereby directs the Superintendent to develop a targeted goal for MESD contract and procurement selection processes that demonstrates response from members of the MWESB community at all threshold levels. MESD commits to an aspirational goal that 15% of the MESD's contract and procurement selection processes demonstrate response from members of the MWESB community at all threshold levels.

The Board therefore authorizes the Superintendent to cause the following:

- Develop and promulgate procedures that focus on practices encouraging inclusion of the MWESB community and other underrepresented communities.
- Engage in conversations with certified MWESB firms, local MWESB Organizations, disabled veteran organizations and individual business community leaders to encourage them to tailor their offerings to the MESD's needs.
- Assist MWESB firms with understanding the ESD's contract selection and procurement processes.
- Use the state COBid certified Firms Directory for a resource.

Report Progress to the MESD Board

The Board desires that the MESD strive to increase diversity, equity and inclusion on an ongoing basis.

The Board therefore directs the Superintendent to:

- Develop administrative regulations to implement these commitments, and
- Make quarterly reports to the Board on the progress of the MESD in these areas.

Acknowledgement by the MESD Board

The Board shall publicly acknowledge those community members and staff members who have committed to achieving high standards pursuant to this policy.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 334.125](#)