

Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee Meeting Notes

December 7, 2022

Members in Attendance:

K. Amenabar	M. Dickey	K. Kardelis	R. Pérez	T. Temple
S. Ashok	C. Farrish	M. Lavelle	D. Quan	M. Vereb
G. Becerra	S. Frank	V. Long	E. Rodriguez	D. Walker
E. Bonhomme	L. Henry	S. McKinney	R. Shaw	K. White
H. Capps	L. Henson	L. Mondragon	P. Simpkins	
Q. Craig	A. Janan	E. Osborne	A. Smith	

28 members were present. Quorum was met.

Other Attendees:

K. Keys-Gamarra	A. Glenn	S. Presidio	I. Spikes
N. King	M. Mason	D. Semper	N. Thomas

6:30 pm Welcome and Updates:

Cheronda Farrish began the meeting by letting the group know that the MSAOC Parent Advocacy handbooks have been distributed. All the Parent Advocacy handbooks (nearly 15,000) have been distributed. Every school received copies and exact numbers were determined by the languages spoken at the school. Handbooks were also provided to the Parent Resource Center, Student Registration, and the Ombudsman's office. Kim Amenabar met with the Family Liaisons to give them information about the handbook and ideas for using it. Information was also sent to principals, and many have included the link to the online version in their communications. The feedback has been very positive.

6:45 pm Presentation from the Chief Equity Officer (CEO)

Dr. Nardos King addressed the committee, responding to questions that had been submitted:

1. How do you define "equity" and how does a school system achieve it?

That has not been defined by the division and we need to do it. People are quick to use the word and often what they refer to is not exactly what we need for our students. It doesn't mean giving everyone what they think they want. It's about redressing the practices and systems that create disproportionate experiences and outcomes. It's about centering those who have been underserved and we want to prioritize the areas of School Funding, Teaching & Learning, Workforce, School Environment, Family & Community Partnerships, and Student Agency.

2. Where do you think FCPS stands in providing an equitable educational experience to all students? Which students are most impacted by inequities in the school system?

FCPS is engaging in the work of designing and offering a more equitable division and school experience. We are farther ahead than we were 3 years ago, and definitely not where we want to be. We continue to work to develop our goals, systems and practices to move closer to where we want to be. The Equity Policy is very important in having a way for us to name that this work is about our data. When you look at our data, Black Students, English Learners, and Students with Disabilities are most impacted by our system. These disparities show up in academic and behavioral data reports, in addition to students' access to high leverage instruction and resources. This is what our data is telling us. If we promise that all kids are going to meet their goals and dreams, we have to be able to speak to how the students who are not being served will meet them as well.

Bob Shaw asked a follow up question about how the school system measures it.

We do have metrics and we do use them to drive our resources in order to maintain student success. Those that need it get extra supports whether it's funding or personnel with special skills to support teachers and staff in their practices. We have real time data and we don't wait until the end of the year, we stop then and deploy support from the Office of School Support and that's being led by data.

Edward Osborne commented that looking at street level data shows that inequities are more stark and wants to make sure that is part of what we look at as well. George Becerra offered that we did have OSS and MTSS at MSAOC last year to talk about how our decisions are data driven.

3. What do you see as the biggest challenges in creating an equitable educational system?

Even getting folks to believe that this is necessary and important. As of last week, it's been 1 year that I've been learning and growing in this work. Engaging with community members who say, "I like you but I don't like your title". When I share what I do people are less likely to listen. There have been people who villainize this work, but we still have to do this work. There are still kids who are not getting the promise and we need to make sure they do. We need to come to consensus on what Equity is and educating people on what we do. Sometimes the national and state systems are a challenge. Virginia Department of Education took down all the state equity work that had been done over the previous years on day one when the new governor came in but we still have to do the work for our students. Lack of clear messaging is why it's so important to have a policy so we can all get to the same page.

Karen Keys-Gamarra commented – I don't think we can do this work until we address what we think this work is and also achieve cultural competence to help people gain the ability to hear and grow from this work. An underlying issue is that when people hear these conversations there's sometimes a defense that goes up in their heads and that doesn't allow a real conversation.

4. Are there updates on your position becoming permanent?

I think Dr. Reid shared that she is not making any changes to the positions and the system until she sees how things operate. I will continue until the superintendent says that I am permanent or will be doing something else. I know I'll be doing this job tomorrow.

5. We have heard that Dr. Williams is consulting with FCPS. What is her role in working with the division? Is the work she began on an Equity Action Plan going to be continued?

I'm super excited that Lisa is consulting. Her main role is to be part of the Strategic Plan and is also helping our office with the work she started. She is like a coach. We have access to her. She is a scholar in this work and helps other systems and the private sector. She is a great resource and I'm super excited to work with her.

George Becerra asked about how the MSAOC could support and assist the CEO in the work of Equity now and as the school board changes in the future.

I will make sure that I will bring you and the power of this group into the work. I'm glad our Strategic Plan is equity focused. When you have just a plan then people focus on the plan. We want equity throughout the district as everyone's responsibility and the equity focused Strategic Plan is the way to get us there.

Following the Q&A, Nina Thomas and Darnessia Semper, leaders of the Equity and Cultural Responsiveness (ECR) Team gave an overview of their work as part of the Chief Equity Office. They shared how the ECR team supports FCPS in considering how we center equity in all of the decisions that we make. ECR frames their focus on Self: what is our personal commitment to equity, Site: what does keeping equity at the center look and sound like in schools and offices, and System: what are our commitments to action as leaders of equity in FCPS. The ECR team has a coordinator, a manager, 7 specialists, and a curriculum resource teacher to support all of FCPS. Their work includes school support, professional learning, leadership coaching & consulting, participation on project teams across the division. In addition, the ECR team trains and supports Equity Leads in every school and office as well as Student Equity Ambassador Leaders (SEALs). The SEALs have been in place at the high school level for 2 ½ years and will be starting in middle schools. They meet regularly to connect and learn and then work with their principals and school Equity Leads around areas of concern.

7:30 pm Equity Policy Feedback:

Dr. Iona Spikes, Director of Equity, shared that FCPS is in the process of creating an Equity policy and are engaging the community via focus groups and a steering committee. The MSAOC is one of the first groups invited to give specific feedback about the components of the policy. Dr. Spikes shared the components of the policy which had also been sent out in the read ahead document. Members were invited to share their thoughts in small groups with facilitators who capture their feedback to bring back to the Equity Policy work group.

8:00 pm Committee Business:

- Approval of November Meeting Minutes – Margo Dickey made the motion to approve the minutes as shared. Edward Osborne seconded. A vote was taken with all in favor. The minutes were approved as submitted.
- Brainstorm Questions/Topics for Lisa Hall
Kenny White opened the floor for members to submit questions and topics for Lisa Hall, Chief Experience and Engagement Office (CXO) who will be presenting at the January meeting. Suggestions included:
 - Since this is a new office, please explain what you do and give an overview of your work?
 - Tell us more about your role and responsibilities and an overview of what your office does.
 - What is your philosophy about a school division's role in communicating with a community as large as FCPS?
 - What is the CXO doing differently than what FCPS has done before? What was your previous role with Dr. Reid in Northshore School District. When asked about hiring a permanent CEO, Dr. Reid stated that she was not going to jump any quick changes, but then created a whole new office of the CXO. How is this justified?
 - Is this position going to be cost effective? How are you going to be evaluated?
 - We know there is a new Strategic Plan in the making. As you have been a part of these conversations what do you see are some changes that may be needed in FCPS related to your office?
 - What are your short and long term goals for the CXO?

Additional questions should be submitted to Kim Amenabar by Monday 12/12

8:15 pm Subcommittee Assignments and Work Time:

Subcommittees met in breakout rooms to continue to plan areas of focus for the annual report.

8:30 pm Call for Motion to Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned directly from each of the subcommittee breakout rooms.

Next Meeting: January 11, 2023, 6:30pm