



**Equity Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2022
5:15 PM-6:45 PM
Educational Support Center, Boardroom**

Please click on this link to the Equity Advisory Council Meeting Presentation: [EAC 110122 Presentation](#)

Members Present (Equity Advisory Council):

Executive Leadership Team Chair: Dr. Cynthia Johnson, Executive Director of Inclusion, Engagement, and Belonging

School Board Members:

Carole Cadue-Blackwood

EAC Members Present:

Adrineh Mehdikhani

Annette Dabney

Doris Ricks

Emerson Hoffzales

Hannah Stone

Jaclyn Samuel

John Rury

Katie Prue

Kenneth St. Pierre

Mark Preut

Monica Stark

Rebecca Reaver

Rebekah Gaston

Salaama Wadud

Sheila Wells-Moreaux

Dr. Sylvia Trevino-Maack

Travis Tozer

Wendo Kimori

Additional Guests:

Jackie Mickel
Dr. Jana Craig-Hare
Kiley Lockett
Shayla Chickaway

Agenda - November 1, 2022

- Welcome
- Four Agreements
- Review of Interim Assessment Data using Protocol
- Intersectionality of Attendance, Behavior, and Mental Health
- What's Happening in Schools to Respond to Data to Change Student Outcomes?
- Building Goal Check-Ins
- Next Steps

Discussion:

The meeting was opened with a welcome from Dr. Johnson. We discussed the four agreements. Dr. Johnson and Kenneth St. Pierre shared some history of the Indigenous People to honor Native American Heritage Month. Next month we will take time to honor the Hispanic community, which celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 through October 15.

Doris Ricks was introduced as our newest member, representing the NAACP.

Dr. Johnson led the conversation regarding our Lawrence Public Schools Equity Policy and how this meeting met the policy's requirements.

LPS Equity Policy



IV. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

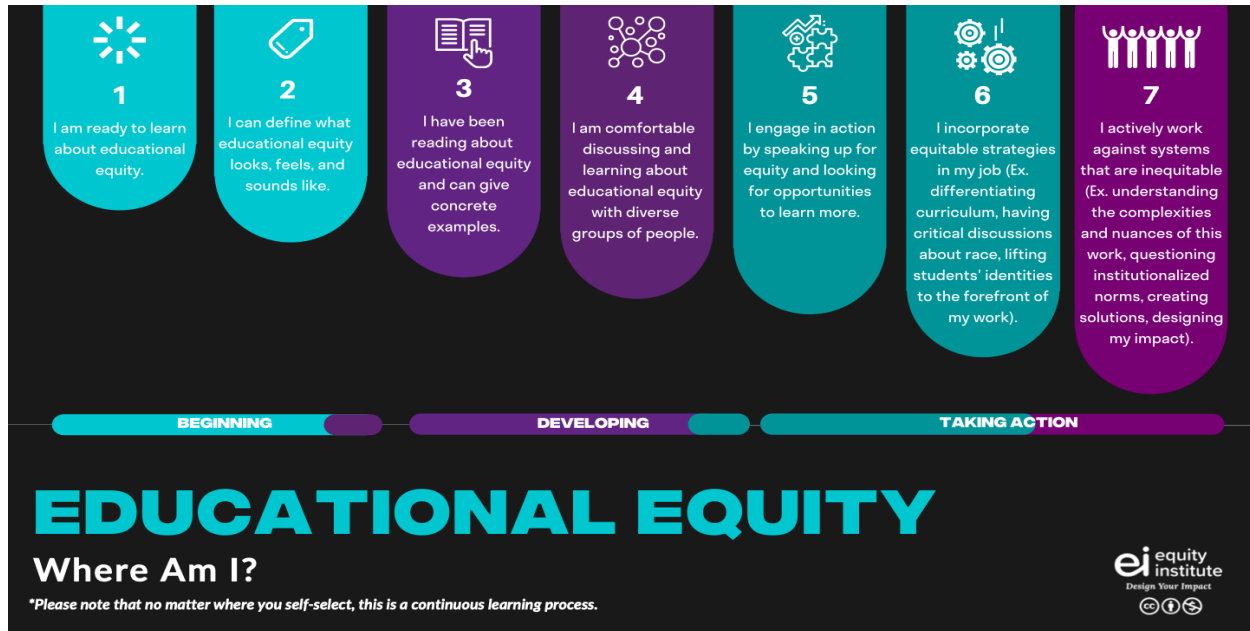
1. Each school and district leadership team shall develop annual priorities that align with district strategic planning and that are outlined in annual School Improvement Plans. All priorities shall account for equity and inclusion.
2. District and building equity advisory committees and programs (for example, Parents of Color Advisory Committee, Equity Advisory Council, and Native American Student Services)- on an ongoing basis, will meaningfully participate with district staff on progress towards School Improvement Plan and district-wide strategic plan implementation. Equity advisory committees and programs, along with district leaders, shall utilize disaggregated data to analyze trends, identify gaps, and develop racial and other equity priorities for schools and district offices.
3. District employee behaviors shall concentrate on elimination of opportunity inequities, particularly those that are predicted on a student's marginalized identities.



V. BOARD MONITORING

1. The superintendent and/or the superintendent's designee shall report progress and outcomes at least quarterly to the board, district and building equity committees, and the broader Lawrence Public Schools community. Reports shall go beyond state and other standardized testing outcomes and shall include race equity explicitly.
2. Building and district administrative leadership performance evaluations shall incorporate clear equity and justice accountability and metrics.

Using the educational equity definition from the LPS Equity Policy, EAC members took time to decide their comfort level addressing this topic. Small groups then discussed the continuum below and the impact it has on ensuring educational equity in LPS.



The graphic shows a continuum of educational equity with seven steps, each with an icon and a description. A progress bar at the bottom indicates the current level: BEGINNING (steps 1-2), DEVELOPING (steps 3-5), and TAKING ACTION (steps 6-7).

Step	Icon	Description
1	Sunburst	I am ready to learn about educational equity.
2	Tag	I can define what educational equity looks, feels, and sounds like.
3	Document with hand	I have been reading about educational equity and can give concrete examples.
4	Network of circles	I am comfortable discussing and learning about educational equity with diverse groups of people.
5	Gears	I engage in action by speaking up for equity and looking for opportunities to learn more.
6	Gears with person	I incorporate equitable strategies in my job (Ex. differentiating curriculum, having critical discussions about race, lifting students' identities to the forefront of my work).
7	Group of people	I actively work against systems that are inequitable (Ex. understanding the complexities and nuances of this work, questioning institutionalized norms, creating solutions, designing my impact).

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY
Where Am I?
**Please note that no matter where you self-select, this is a continuous learning process.*

ei equity institute
Design Your Impact
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Dr. Jana Craig-Hare, Director of Data and Assessment, shared the Interim Assessment data. She shared that we used common district assessments to prepare for the state assessments last year, and the participation rate was not good. This year we are using interim assessments from the state to prepare. This will give our students a chance to use the

online system and become familiar with it before state assessment time. There was a consensus among our members that language on the state assessments could contribute to lower scores, and we need to look at ways of making sure students know what they are being asked to do. After reviewing the data, there was concern that many students were at Level 1.

Dr. Johnson said we are looking at data in a completely different way than we ever have before. Looking at it at the building level is powerful! Looking at subgroup data has led us to move forward in a completely different focus, especially in our equity work.

After reviewing the data and having some discussion about it, we continued with our discussions using the data protocol. Each table discussed this and provided the following compilation:

Data Protocol Discussion Responses (Note: The information below was typed as written by EAC members.)

What are the results?

- Test scores are not promising across the board. I feel this is indicative of the health of the district as a whole. And, as is almost always the case, marginalized students suffer worse when overall resources are stretched.
- The current results are not what we want. We don't want those results to represent our district.
- Poverty, ELL, students with disabilities, African-American, Native American, and Hispanic all have the highest numbers in Level 1
- Too many students at Levels 1 and 2
- See gaps but 3rd grade and 8th grade have no opportunity to catch up—gap increases
- Too many students at Level 1
- I think that there are a lot of factors that influence data
 - Home life
 - Test taking ability
- Big achievement gaps
- Across the board scored Level 1 and Level 2
 - Race—students from the global majority
 - SES—low/free and reduced lunch
 - Ability level/behavior—students with exceptionalities minus gifted students
 - Language—emerging multilingual

What are they telling you?

- That the district isn't doing a good job of preparing students to measure up to the standards set by the state. Maybe that isn't even a bad thing, but what they are

being taught isn't as quantifiable. Test scores only show how well a student takes a test.

- Disparities exist regardless of difference in vocabulary, and other extraneous factors
- Certain subgroups could benefit from higher quality learning experiences
- Marginalized disparities across all grades/levels 1-4
- Test bias
- Pre-teaching and review needed with wraparound continuous review
- Kids/teachers need to practice on state assessment test taking skills
- Students don't care about the test
- Improve instruction methods
- Build better relationships
- There are factors that limit the potential of the students
- We need to identify them/what are those limiting factors?
- Need to individualize the students—how do they learn?
- Need to focus on equity and outcomes
- How does geography and access to resources affect this?
- What resources are we offering students to support their learning?
- How much of the test scores are due to technology?

What trends are you observing from your analysis?

- That test scores follow along with the stereotypes predictable to each group. Why? Why is the district shackled by the same unfair tropes as an institutionally unfair society?
- ELL/ESOL, SPED and African American students are performing lower than other groups
- The disparities are seen within the same group across levels in different subjects
- Common language and common vocabulary with synonyms to help students comprehend and connect to what they know or have learned
- Common language taught in Levels 1 and 2 and/or cultural differences
- Too many marginalized students in Level 1, too few in Level 4
- That work needs to be done
- There is a disconnect in the students with a gap between the levels
- Level 1 is heavy
- The district seems to be taking it seriously
- Further solidifies the biased test questions with ability and culture

Are the results of the analysis surprising or unsurprising? How so?

- I was surprised that the Level 1 and 2 scores comprise >60% of all students. I feared the students would be suffering academically post Covid and budget crisis, and if test scores are an indication of reality, then the conclusion is that the district is not performing well enough for all students. A rising tide lifts all boats.
- The extent of the existing gap is surprising; the gap itself is not surprising (sadly)
- Unsurprising—systemic racism in general; also, standardized testing has beginnings in racism. They were created to only include the majority group.

- Not surprising, but alarming
- Underachievers
- Yes—not sure why some populations are outperforming others
- Unsurprising due to Covid-19
- Not necessarily surprising, but I did not think the gap was that big
- I'm concerned about focus on "bubble kids" and Level 1→we need to get more kids to Levels 3 and 4
- Unsurprising. This has been in place for 50 years with (testing) consistently reflecting and modeling to grow the ability to accurately capture student learning and understanding of standards.

What possible cause(s) do you think might have led to the results?

- Vocabulary
- Connection with families
- Representation and deeper understanding
- Covid and budget cuts
- Intersectionality between groups creates more questions
- There are generational differences when comparing students that were born here vs immigrant families.
- Covid caused many issues for families and students
- Communication
- Family connecting
- Biases
- Transparency from teachers to parents
- Parents not informed or know how to help their children
- Kindergarten students come without pre-literacy skills so there is pressure for them to catch up and behaviors may increase
- Fidgets and breaks to decrease test fear or anxiety
- Tutoring for all students of color and low scoring students with teachers that look like them
- Maybe need more practice to show the same skills
- Covid-19
- Lack of communication
- Lack of parent involvement
- Do they know the vocabulary/terminology? Do they understand the words/language?
- How are the students learning? How are the teachers teaching?
- Time—Do they have enough time?
- Mental Health/Where were they at mentally?
- Family/Home life?
- Social & economic inequity, with deep historical and political roots
- Lack of internally sustaining pedagogy within the classroom
- Lack of supports to provide needs (trauma informed care, SEL, Restorative Practices, racial or social equity, accessibility to materials, etc.)
- Bias in testing (more specifically with questions)

Other Questions:

- What now?
- Multi-racial/Middle Eastern/White have been clumped together in the past, we wonder why?
- Are their equity considerations regarding the design and compliance of IEPs and 504 plans? Are historically marginalized students receiving equitable SPED services?
- Need to address test anxiety among many “marginalized” students
- What steps are being taken to address common language or accessibility?
- Who are we talking about when we say “marginalized populations”? How are intersectionality resources allocated to buildings being acknowledged?

Jackie Mickel, Lead Elementary School Principal, shared what is being done at the elementary level to help students.

Kenneth St. Pierre, Native American Student Services Coordinator, spoke about upcoming events for the Native American students in our district.

Kiley Lockett, Mental Health Coordinator, shared what our district is doing to help the mental health of our students, including our new Social Emotional Learning curriculum.

Dr. Johnson reported that each school was beginning the building goal check-ins this week. Building Goal Check-Ins focus on what schools are using to support the goals of the LPS Strategic Plan.

Dr. Johnson said she would share the link to the Board Presentation entitled “Safe and Supportive Schools Fall Data and Equity Update” from the Oct 24, 2022 Board Meeting. Here is the link: <https://youtu.be/gWXfgrqAL11?t=3425>

The meeting concluded with a discussion about providing input to the state regarding the development of assessments. After attending professional development this week, Dr. Jana Craig-Hare has communicated, “The State standards for English Language Arts (ELA) will begin the review process later this year. A public review and comment period will be included as part of this process. As soon as the public review period opens, we will let you know and provide the link to you. The Mathematics standards review will begin shortly after ELA and follow the same process.”

Notes were taken by Michelle Hunter