



Equity Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
May 2, 2023
5:15 PM – 6:30 PM
Education Support Center, WebEx Room 1

Facilitated (Via WebEx) by Dr. Cynthia Johnson, Executive Director of Inclusion, Engagement, and Belonging
Guest Presenter: Ron May, Director, Human Resources and Transportation

Members Present:

Adrineh Mehdikhani, Annette Dabney, Becky Reaver, Doris Ricks, Gary Schmidt, Katie Prue, Kenneth St. Pierre, Mark Preut, Rebekah Gaston, Sheila Wells-Moreaux, Therese Brink Edgecomb, Travis Tozer, Wendo Kimori

District Staff Present:

Kiley Luckett, Mental Health Coordinator

Dr. Johnson opened the meeting with the four agreements of Courageous Conversation. She also acknowledged that May was Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage month.

Wendo Kimori shared her experience receiving the prestigious Princeton award for her equity work. Wendo is a senior this year and after graduation, she will continue her education in communications and public relations. Wendo plans on attending law school. Dr. Johnson told her that we celebrate her each step of the way!

Ron May, Director, Human Resources and Transportation joined the group to discuss upcoming transfers. Rebekah Gaston and Katie Prue had asked for this discussion. There were concerns regarding the accessibility of the transfer form and an understanding of what criteria the school district looks at when considering a transfer request. The transfer form is not transparent enough and the criteria is not explained well enough.

- There was a delay in posting the transfer request form due to the changing boundaries. They have been set now and this should be approved at the Monday, May 8th School Board meeting. In a typical year, forms would normally be available at the same time.
- The School Board has asked for the verbiage to be changed on the form.
- There is still some concern about parents not knowing the criteria looked at. Parents may have obstacles filling out the form. If there are questions or concerns, they can call the Enrollment Center at 785-330-1921.
- The district does look at a student's (or family's) story when considering a transfer. We would like to see an option added to upload a video file if a parent chooses.
- There are more school transfer requests than you would think. It is important to remember that even if a student is denied a transfer to one school, that same student may be accepted at another school. This would not require reapplying.
- We are trying to place teachers at the schools for next August at this time. When this is decided, future requests will be limited by how many students can be added at a school and still retain a reasonable class size.
- It is important not to penalize a student that has disciplinary issues with a transfer request to another school. A fresh start should be a reason to consider. However, there could be issues with accepting a new student with disciplinary issues and the number of current students that may be having disciplinary issues.
- We don't transfer a student who has a problem without first looking at whether or not the school has done everything they can do first.
- The story for a transfer is always taken into consideration. It is important to remember that parents request the transfer, principals do not.

Collective Statement from the Equity Advisory Council regarding school transfer requests:

Please ensure the transfer form looks through the equity lens including the following:

- ***Ensure accessibility of form for all***
- ***Option of video attachment to tell their story***

- **Make sure there is no limit (should be long text), so the person completing the form can tell us as much as they want**
- **Make the form easier, more user friendly**
- **Make it clear by explaining steps like you can attach a file on the next page or that if your transfer form is denied, you do not need to complete another request form to transfer to another school**
- **It is not clear that the Enrollment Center's telephone number is a number to call for help**
- **Deadline for acceptance should be stated clearly, but the date should be extended and add information about applications accepted outside that date**

The next area of discussion centered around free and reduced students. Food is a big equity issue. Dr. Johnson had spoken with Julie Henry, Director of Nutrition and Wellness and shared what Julie said. We do not have specific information for free breakfast and lunch for next year. It is a process that has to be completed. The parents complete the form and then there is a formula to use to identify student percentages at each school. It can be a slippery slope when applying for grants. Students need to be certified for free meals. When our district doesn't have a higher number of students receiving free and reduced meals, it makes it harder. The Equity Advisory Council will continue to work with Julie Henry in other areas of our district to meet the needs of each student.

Lawrence has a small number of public sites for free lunches when compared to Topeka. A thought was shared that we should be providing free lunches over the summer. There was discussion about this need.

Information from Julie Henry, Director of Nutrition and Wellness - Sites for Summer 2023:

2023 SFSP Sites

Public (Open) Sites

- Library
- Holcom
- Just Food

Public (Open) Sites + BGC + Summer Learning

- Broken Arrow
- New York
- Sunset Hill
- Woodlawn

Enrolled (Closed) Sites

- Parks & Recreation Sites
 - South Park
 - East Lawrence Recreation Center
- Bert Nash
- Greenbush (at Wakarusa)
- ESY Sites
 - Kennedy
 - Cordley
 - West
 - LHS

Collective Statement from the Equity Advisory Council Regarding Summer Food Service

Statement for Summer food service:

EAC recommends USD 497 offer Summer Food Service Program meals in all high-poverty neighborhoods in 2023, with a goal of students having to travel no more than one-half mile to an open, accessible meal site.

Dr. Johnson will be sharing our Equity update from the May 8th School Board meeting at our June 6th Equity Advisory Council meeting. She also asked for feedback and ways to improve our Equity Advisory Council. Here is a link to the Google form to respond: [Equity Advisory Council Feedback](#)