

BOARD MEETING MINUTES--REVISED

June 15, 2020

Call to Order

President Fralick called the Study Session of the Shoreline Board of Directors to order via Zoom at 5:00 p.m. on June 15, 2020. Rebecca Miner, Superintendent; Curtis Campbell, Public Information Officer; and Kathie Schindler, Executive Assistant, attended this meeting at the Administrative Offices at the Shoreline Center. President Fralick announced that the meeting was being recorded and also asked for consensus that this meeting would conclude at 6:30 p.m. in order to provide a break between meetings.

Roll Call

Present: Heather Fralick, President; David Wilson, Vice President; Sara Betnel, Member; Meghan Jernigan, Member; and Rebeca Rivera, Member. *(Since this meeting was being conducted via Zoom, President Fralick had a visual that all board members were in attendance.)*

Facilitator: Mary Fertakis, Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA)

Summary of Last Meeting

President Fralick announced that at the last workshop on June 1, there was consensus among board members to move forward with some form of community listening sessions. As a first step, Superintendent Miner would work with one or two board members on the components of implementation. As a result of that direction, President Fralick and Superintendent Miner met with Mary Fertakis and Tanisha Brandon-Felder, Director of Equity and Family Engagement to determine how the community listening sessions would fit into the race and equity work already underway.

Topic: Consideration of Board Community Listening Sessions

Superintendent Miner asked for confirmation that the goal of this meeting was to develop a framework for moving forward with the community listening sessions. The board members nodded in agreement. Ms. Fertakis and Dr. Brandon-Felder had been asked to re-ground everyone on the work that has already been done on race and equity. The intent was to center the community conversations in the context of that work.

The agenda for this meeting included the following questions:

- 1) What work has been done in the district regarding race and equity?
- 2) How do we use that work as a foundation for our board work?
- 3) What is the goal for outcomes of the community conversation in the district?
- 4) What would a structure or framework look like to build toward that goal? What are some best practices that others have used? How do we avoid creating harm?

“Big Picture” – Mary Fertakis

Ms. Fertakis outlined the process involved in school boards implementing community listening sessions/town halls and acknowledged the need to view this through the lens of the Board's governance role, which includes the following:

- 1) There was consensus at the last workshop on June 1 to do this as a board
- 2) Superintendent was tasked with providing some groundwork in the interim
- 3) The Board set the objective—to gain insight from the community in order to inform policy
- 4) Develop a structure (by staff with board input)
- 5) Staff brings recommendations back to the Board
- 6) Board participates in listening sessions
- 7) Staff compiles data from the listening sessions
- 8) Board incorporates data into policy review, creation and revision process

The emphasis needs to be on honoring the work of staff, the voices of students, the voices of the historically marginalized populations and the community whose tax dollars support the schools. Ms. Fertakis shared that when she spoke to colleagues and contacts on this topic, the very first thing everyone recommended was to start with student voices. “They are the first customers and the policies that are developed will have a direct impact on them.” They also suggested strongly that since school district personnel have been classified as “essential,” boards should take a close look at the guidance right now as there are potentially some exceptions that can be tapped into in regard to “in-person versus virtual” opportunities, and that there were some opportunities available right now for combining virtual with in-person meetings. It was preferred to get the people who are the focus of the listening session in the same space if at all possible, along with any staff needed to facilitate. There were specific recommendations about table setups, 6-foot social distancing and translators, if necessary. On the virtual side this would include board members and others who are interested in listening. It was also recommended that the targeted groups not be mixed, whether it be students, ELL population, historically marginalized populations—they should all be separate groups. Consideration should be given to allowing panelists to turn off their cameras if that provides an additional layer of comfort in speaking on difficult topics.

Another recommendation involved restricting the number of staff on the virtual call. In some cases, staff have recorded the sessions and used them later as professional development opportunities. Superintendent Miner asked for clarification on restricting staff from participating given OPMA rules and guidelines. Ms. Fertakis responded that this would depend on the level of participation by board members; it may be that there wouldn't be a quorum to make it an open public meeting.

Equity Work in Shoreline – Dr. Tanisha Brandon-Felder

So far this year, two community opportunities had been offered. In the fall, Pulling Back the Curtain, focused on building awareness regarding what has been happening in Shoreline over the past four years. This spring, Spotlight on Equity, focused on what has been happening since COVID-19 began but occurred prior to the more recent tragic killings in our nation. Both videos have been made available for viewing.

Dr. Brandon-Felder highlighted the importance of listening to student voices as that has been a large part of what her department has continued to do and was a significant contributor to the implementation of the Race and Equity policy. Initially, students were invited to join the District Equity Committee; however it was difficult to match schedules with students for committee meetings due to their classes and activities, so student forums were held at the secondary schools and Cascade K-8 (7th and 8th graders). There were 40-60 students in each forum; over 220 students participated in total. Going along with what Ms. Fertakis spoke about, they limited the number of adults in the room. Typically, it was Dr. Brandon-Felder and her assistant (Kim Darcy) and one other adult (not a classroom teacher or principal) from the individual buildings. This way, students felt safer in sharing their information. The work over the last 2-1/2 years has involved charting specific responses to very intentional questions and back and forth Q&As in open forum. This has been instrumental in getting feedback to principals and teachers and in creating professional development, which aligns with the policy work that was put in place. Dr. Brandon-Felder told the Board she would be happy to share that information at a later time if they were interested. Other opportunities have included going into classrooms to meet with students and most recently, Dr. Brandon-Felder met virtually with some students to hear their thoughts on curriculum.

Director Jernigan asked if the student participation in the policy work in 2017 is ongoing. Yes, once a year Dr. Brandon-Felder visits the schools for this specific purpose. The students self-select and receive release time to participate. It is a very wide variety of students that are a part of this

conversation and provide feedback—includes English learners, medically fragile, low income, LGBTQA, and students of color.

Director Betnel asked about how those conversations have evolved over the past few years. The first year focused on finding out what was happening on the student side and defining equity. If they were to create a law or policy, what would that involve, what would they like to see included. During the first session, questions were asked about what students were experiencing—positive and negative—and what types of things they saw in the system for which adults could be held accountable. In the second year, focus was on the policy and asking students if they were aware of its existence and whether or not they had observed any changes (better or worse) since its adoption. Most recently, the focus was on micro-aggressions and where they might be experienced, from students or staff. The sharing of the results on what they say has been fairly widespread. One of the questions asked this year was: “What is something you want adults to know about your everyday experience as a student?”

Director Jernigan mentioned that she had the impression from one of the Q&As that Dr. Brandon-Felder’s hiring and the establishment of her department was the result of an equity audit. She asked for clarifying information on that topic. Since this specific work occurred before Dr. Brandon-Felder was hired, Superintendent Miner fielded this question. She explained that when she first came to Shoreline in 2014, questions around equity frequently came up in her superintendent entry plan work. That first year, the District contracted with the Puget Sound Educational Service District, which is a very strong anti-racism organization. A district-wide committee was formed, on which she and the board president served in order to endorse the work. That committee worked for approximately a year and came up with the recommendation to form an equity department. She and the board president stepped back and allowed the committee to make their recommendation.

Board Discussion

The goal for the community listening sessions, as stated at the June 1 meeting, was to use the information gathered from the community sessions to inform policy. President Fralick added that she would also like to see individual goals for each session. The Board discussed, in depth, ideas as to how best to implement, facilitate, co-create with community, and evaluate these sessions. Ms. Miner offered to take notes on screen so all could see, follow along and amend as desired. Some of the bullet points included:

- Co-creation with the community group involved with the topic
 - Have them help us find the stakeholders
 - Co-creation of the questions
- Community members who are knowledgeable about this work and the community help create the questions
- Common essential questions informed by some of the decision-making before the Board
 - Do you feel welcome?
 - What is the district doing well?
 - What barriers is the district putting up?
- When the Equity and Family Engagement Department asked questions they asked three questions.
- **What do we do with the information after we have it?** When Dr. Brandon-Felder does it, she looks for professional development opportunities, builds systems so that it looks different in the future. How do we activate the information and center on the voices? This will look different for the Board than for staff.

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- Good resource: Equity Advisory Team - stakeholder group could be a resource: 20 stakeholders who continue the work of equity. This was a continuation of the first 50 people who were on the initial District Equity Committee. They do an open call for this group but they need to have some background or knowledge in equity and in pushing the work forward. They make room for childcare and food at these meetings.
- Encourage us to use this as a planning tool for next year and for consideration of moving forward.
- Structural questions:
 - Don't want to ignore/lose families and family member perspectives
 - Who is designing this? Don't have the people working on this to be the "easy" people to find and get to this
 - Assign one or two board members to each community conversation?
 - Number of listening sessions?
 - How does the co-creation work?
 - How does this work in the context of COVID-19?
 - Do we try to have a minimum number like four per year and if we can do more, we do more?
 - How do we decide what communities to invite?
 - Strong feelings about starting with communities of color; what other communities would we think about talking to?
 - What role does the wider community have in bringing up ideas of who we would talk to?
- We've circled around three themes:
 - Start with communities of color
 - Start with students
 - Include topic of pandemic/COVID-19 challenges/learnings, etc.
- Make groups as similar as possible and this might be more than one meeting
- Who is attending?
- What are we getting out of the sessions to make sure we are incorporating what we've heard?
- Avoid misinterpretations of expectations
- Brainstormed list:
 - special needs students and families
- Would we do this in such a way that all board members could listen and all attend and all hear the information?
- Interest in having all five board members attend the meeting with community rather than breaking it out and sharing a report.
- What are the decisions coming before the Board in the next few months that might be informed by this work? Two key things: (1) What does the return to school look like in the fall and (2) the budget.
- There is a clear need in the community to be heard.
- Possible Proposal (act of putting this together will create new opportunities)
 - Start with communities of color – starting with students is fine
 - Hear about their experiences
 - Learn what they want to share with us
 - Learn what their needs are overall and in going back to school
 - Be curious about how students are spending their time while out of school
 - Think about racial justice
 - How can we transform relations between education and families
 - Directors Jernigan and Rivera to work with Superintendent Miner and Dr. Brandon-Felder
 - Create a plan to move these listening sessions forward
 - Implement the plan **after co-creating this with community**

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- After doing one listening session, choose another one for moving forward with a next conversation
- What do we share that can happen, continue, change as a result of this conversation? We don't want to ask student to keep sharing and not make changes. Co-create how students would like us to follow up and ensure this is a two-way communication
- Counter a deficit model
- When we connect with students, start with questions that start with what kind of learning are they doing at home

Next steps:

- 1) Ms. Miner will work with Dr. Brandon-Felder, Director Jernigan and Director Rivera to co-create the community listening session with students and deliver to the Board in the next eight weeks
- 2) Dr. Brandon-Felder would like to include the CEE survey results in the work but not sure how quickly those will be delivered; includes very good questions that are focused on families and students separately
- 3) Consider the intersectional representation (students of color, Gay Straight Alliance, special education community, English Language Learners) – intentionally reach out to groups that can help to ensure that representation is present for this conversation

Adjournment: 6:31 p.m.

Heather Fralick, School Board President

Attest: August 3, 2020

Rebecca L. Miner, Secretary to Board of Directors