Educational Equity Committee
October 22, 2020
10am-11:30 am
Join Zoom Meeting
https://soesd.zoom.us/j/4876428933
Meeting ID: 487 642 8933

Attendees: Merrill Roberts, Eileen, Micke-Johnson, Younghee Kim, Jodi Droesch, Martha Ibarra, Andrea Partsafas, Cecilia Giron

Hub: René Brandon, Chelsea Reinhart, Teresa Slater, Vicki Risner

Purpose of Meeting: The Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub's Agency Advisory Council has identified educational preparedness for young children of color in Southern Oregon as a priority focus area. We are convening partners representing early learning, K-12 education, high education, health sector and culturally specific family-serving organizations to drive this work forward. Families with lived experience will guide our work.

Agenda

Introductions:

>Merrill Roberts – Central Point School District, Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA)
>Martha Ibarra – CCRN and RCC part-time faculty
>Younghee Kim – SOU, Early Childhood Development Program
>Teresa Slater – Early Learning Hub
>Eileen Micke-Johnson – RCC, Early Childhood and Early Education Program
>Jodi Droesch – Health manager for Southern Oregon Head Start
>Chelsea Reinhart – Early Learning Hub
>Andrea Partsafas– Federal Program Coordinator, Medford School District
>Cecilia (Did not record last name) – Americorps Vista, SOESD
>Vicki Risner – Early Learning Hub
>René Brandon – Early Learning Hub

Professional Learning & Discussion: Floyd Cobb & John Krownapple's *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation*

>PowerPoint Presentation. Slide 1 – Figure 1.1 Dysfunctional Cycle of Equity Work

There is usually something bad that happened in a community, a catalyst, and the leadership respond with a commitment to equity. Experts are brought in, meetings are held, a committee is formed, work with the expert, then the expert leaves, then things stall out. The status quo box is checked with equity training until the next really bad thing happens.

One of the stories that the authors share it the Streetlight Effect

- Are we looking where it's easiest?
- Have we been focusing on the wrong things?
- Are we seeing what we see because it's what we want to see?
- Are we unaware that anything exists beyond the light provided by a system designed to maintain itself?
- Can we move past relying exclusively on strategies such as mandatory diversity, equity, or anti-bias training?
- Are we ready to deal with the underlying reasons why we haven't ventured further afield?

Negative Campaigns Do Not Produce Meaningful Change
- Movements centered on being against something do not invoke reflection, aspirations, and clarify of direction & don't lead to meaningful change.
    - Anti-drug Campaign – Just Say No
    - Anti-bullying Campaign – Zero Tolerance
    - They don't give people something to say yes to, a common goal to say yes to
    - The authors brought up that anti-bias trainings often have the opposite of the intended affect.

It's more powerful to be for something than against it. For example: Affirmative Action
- People can stand against something for a number of reasons
    - There are people who believe that Affirmative Action gives special treatment to some people rather than selecting the most qualified applicant for a position.
    - Other people believe that Affirmative Action further stigmatizes an already disenfranchised group of people and they are not supportive of it either.
- People must have shared agreements (ie: vision) for them to support an idea
    - In order to support Affirmative Action, groups would have to be united for that policy, identifying that it protects members from historically excluded groups from continuing to be disproportionately harmed by discrimination, whether or not that discrimination is intentional.

Breakout Discussion: Recall a time when you've taken part in a movement or campaign.
- Where was your energy focuses: for or against?
- Was your energy positive or negative?
- How did you feel as a result?
- What were the results of the work?

René: Is there something that one of the groups want to share from this discussion?

Chelsea: Something that we had in common was more with campaigning in high school vs now as an adult. There are more limitations when you are representing an agency and can't be as vocal. Can't express a strong opinion either way.

René: Public health has a history of using shock and fear in campaigns. In the '80's they used the film *Red Asphalt* to show trauma-inducing images which didn't translate into the real change they wanted to see: a reduction in students drinking and driving.

Merrill: We talked about how zero tolerance for bullying has a narrow vision. It doesn't really take into account what's underneath or downstream from the bully themselves. How are we addressing what's going on with them, what support they might need, or reteaching needed? We talked about sharing anti-racist stuff with our kids, which can often be too intense. Be uplifting as well as informative.

René: The authors talked about what is really powerful for transforming equity within a region is coming together for a Shared Vision to show what we can be for together.
- Causes change in both individuals AND social systems we are trying to influence
- Moves us from 'who we are' to 'who we want to be'
  - "This is not who we are' statements can be very off putting to those who see it as exactly who they are.
  - 'Who we want to be' statements are inclusive and creates a sense of belonging.
- Offers possibility of a common identity as we move forward
- Assists in identifying what justice and healing look like

"Diversity" Strategies That Undermine Belonging:
- We need more poor students in Advanced Placement Classes
- We need fewer children of color referred to Special Education
- We need more LatinX students graduating from high school
- We need fewer black boys being expelled from preschool
We often focus on the more or less, and stop short of asking why that data currently exists. We're not hitting the root cause of why this disproportional data exists in the first place.

The authors say that:
- Diversity cannot be the goal or vision
- Diversity already exists
- Proximity does not ensure connectivity
- Diversity does not ensure belonging
- Diversity does not ensure that they have access or that their dignity is affirmed

Beyond Diversity: Inclusion vs Integration, Segregation and Exclusion
- Engagement within a community where the equal worth and inherent dignity of each person is honored
- An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging
- it affirms the talents, beliefs, backgrounds and ways of living of its members
- There isn't a need or forced choice for members not of the dominant culture to create their own support system

"Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies. It is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for

everyone. Inclusion is about creating a better world for everyone." Diane Richler, Past President, Inclusion International

Breakout Discussion:
- Share a situation when you either felt you 'belonged' to a group OR when you felt you did not 'belong' to a group
- Did the sense of belonging or not belonging impact the outcome of the situation?

René: Our groups talked about childhood experiences, adult experiences, and even coming into a new job you can feel excluded into that group.

Beyond Access: Belonging
Using Maslow's hierarchy, transformed from a triangle into stair case for success; representing Physiological needs, Safety needs, Belonging, Achievement and Self Actualization as sequential steps. What the authors underscore throughout the book is that:
- **Belongingness** must precede **achievement**
  Their examples show what would happen when Achievement is moved before Belonging.
- What we call an achievement gap would be more accurately named a belonging gap. We are not truly accepting all participants into the dominant group and yet we are expecting them to perform and achieve at the same levels as those who do have acceptance and belonging in the dominant group. Shows just how unrealistic that strategy really is.

This is where the book starts to launch into the keys for what successful equity implementation is. I've summarized the first two chapters of the book:

The Keys to Successful Implementation

Dispositions of Dignity – Personal & organizational capacities
- Listening
- Empathy
- Patience
- Openness

Indicators of Belonging – Four **states of being** to asses how well dignity is honored
- Affirmed
- Validated
- Accepted
- Treated Fairly

René: A couple of questions:
- Does this feel like a valuable use of our time together? Maybe just 30 minutes of the meeting to chew on a concept.)
  - Verbal support came from Younghee, Eileen, others agreed
- How many of you who wanted the book have received them?
  - Tally taken for who still needs the book.

Update: Preschool Promise Recruitment Success for families of color and Spanish-speaking families

René: We have an interesting issue that is happening. This is year 5 of Preschool Promise. The first four years we never had to do any sort of recruitment, the slots were always full by the time the first day of preschool arrived. This year, we believe due to the impact of Covid, we are not seeing as many screening applications for new families as we have slots. As of this morning:

- We had 73 new families filling out the screening forms to determine eligibility out of 109 openings (after continuing and conversion children) for those new children. Many of these may not be income eligible.
- We are not seeing as many families apply.
- The GOOD news: of those 73 screening forms, we do have quite a bit of demographic diversity represented
    - 40% identified as LatinX
    - 33% identified as Spanish as their home language
    - 50% identified as white
    - 10% identified as other
- All but Head Start plan to use the in-person model. Head Start will be starting virtually.
- Last year we had 217 Preschool Promise slots. After passing of the Student Success Act, we now have 343 Preschool Promise enrollment opportunities.

Introduction and Discussion of Draft Strategic Map for Committee for 2020-2021

René: I'm going to table this item to a future date.

Next Meeting:
Both November and December meetings are conflicting with holidays.
Next Meeting: January 28, 2021
10-11:30 am