

Community Listening Session Notes – 2/23/22 Group 1

Hosted by Director Burke

What comes to mind when you think of racial equity?

- It means the ability to talk about it. Talking about equity is challenging for adults and is big and we need our kids being exposed to it. We don't want our kids shying away and I feel that is the first step.
- There is an opportunity for societal change when we talk about and think of equity.
- Regardless of race all of our students should have the opportunity to learn and participate in discussions about equity.
- Racial equity means ALL voices are heard and valued.
- Racial equity means treating people fairly and giving all the same positive approach regardless of heritage regardless of how they look.
- Racial equity implies a presupposition of positivity.
- The district should consider other kinds of equity. Not just race but it is many things.
- There are many countries who have similar issues but don't focus on race. In those countries there is an awareness and knowledge of needs of their society. We should consider being more like that. We need to see it and talk about it.
- We want to see it and see people like us in the teachers, staff, board. Our children need to see themselves reflected in the faces of these people.

What is the district's role in achieving racial equity?

- The district should think about lots of types of equity not just racial equity.
- Please consider folks who are on an Out of District Waiver. The district should know that we feel pressure to do well and follow what is expected in waiver. Parents do worry about if our student making a mistake and we need more clarity on what exactly what the standard is for behavior and learning so our children do not get kicked out.
- The district needs to understand that a lot of minorities waiver in.
- The school district's responsibility should include benchmarks around racial equity.
- We should know as parents what racial equity standards are and need the district to educate the community and parents.
- The district is taking an active role in curriculum, informing parents and, chooses the correct balanced and accurate curriculum.
- The district should educate parents so that we are all part of our commitments.
- Part of the district's responsibility is to be transparent.
- At times parents feel frustrated that it is not clear about the standard or that it feels like sometimes standards are lowered.

- The district should have high expectations for all students. That is what equity is. This should include scaffolds and assistance but that does not mean not having high standards for all.
- Do not lower standards but be clear about what they are and how to get there so all kids can achieve.
- Most families care a lot but don't always know the way forward at all times. The district should help families to move forward.
- Let families know how they can help. If something is lacking we will help if you bring us on board.
- Families need clarity from the school board and district about what racial equity means.
- Continue to have meetings like this to have a better understanding. If we don't understand one another we can't help and we want to be able to help.
- I want you to ask the question: What are the fundamental things that should be taught in the schools? I want you to ask us this so we can answer you.
- The purpose of school is to equip students with life after school. This can mean be a citizen in our community and the world. The board needs to know there is reading, writing, math and also social emotional. This will help with creating racial equity.
- The district and board have a role to eliminating barriers and then adapting to eliminate those barriers.
- The board is uniquely positioned to see barriers. Be sensitive to recognizing barriers. Look at the system to overcome them
- The district should be measuring everything. To determine if we have racial equity.
- It is the district's responsibility to share and be direct about the gaps and issues. The board needs to invest in resources to help track lots of kinds of results.
- To improve racial equity you must hold all parts of the district accountable for sharing the good bad and the ugly or the tough stuff.
- Do not skip any parts of our history. Teach children to be able to question for themselves.

What measures would you use to evaluate student success?

- Students' perceptions have to be part of deciding if we are addressing about equality and all kinds of equality.
- Measure the resources we already use and evaluate if they should be continued.
- The board needs to invest in resources track a variety of results.
- We need to measure everything and review everything we do in a variety of ways including
 - -perception data of students
 - -perception data of teachers
 - -perception data of parents
- When teachers make good gains, we should reward them and recognize them.
- Be sure to share results of measurements when it is good or bad.
- Observe for very specific feedback on classroom performance. Go into classrooms more and watch more.

- If you want to see more equity work then measure/observe/monitor what you want to see. Share the results of that
- Assess what is happening to students after they leave. Measure if they go to school or are employed.
- Measuring student perception is important. We often measure others observations but we should really check with students and their experience.
- Measure and review student perception about their experiences at school, if students believe the curriculum is inclusive and what their life at school is like.
- Review hiring and look for if students see examples of themselves in their teachers and staff members. Are teachers reflective of student population?
- Check if teachers feel supported. Check on teacher perception.
- The board needs to know if recently students are talking more of issues that are important. Ask them.
- Assess if teachers feel they have the correct training to know what to do when things happen in our district -example of racial concerns from junior high. Be sure we train staff so students learn how to talk about issues around racial equity.
- Measure if books are being used and be sure they are taught.
- Overall the board needs to look at perception, test scores, graduation rates, composition of AP scores.

Do you have any final thoughts to share with the board?

- I think we need to check in our students if they are well.

Community Listening Session Notes – 2/23/22 Group 2

Hosted by Director Dickinson

What comes to mind when you think of racial equity?

- Political and social division; some are motivated by division; concerned for my children's future
- Against racial equity being talked to students
- Definition of racial equity; District's definition is limited
- Take out politics and ensure all families have access
- Equitable access for what is needed; Is Equity an outcome?; never going to get every single group to be the same; Who is equal to whom?; we should strive for equality and access; concerned about equal outcomes--not doable or achievable
- Belonging = racial equity; acknowledge races do exist; accept others differences
- Starts at your house; did not expect the school to be the parents of my son; it is a political thing to me as well; putting one race in front of another makes it political
- Don't create victims out of some and work to bring together our children to be seen for their value and character

What is the district's role in achieving racial equity?

- It takes a village; can't do it on my own; great experience here in UP; we read the bible; skin color does not matter; all created equal; slippery slope; district does not have a role in this topic
- Getting clear where morality and substantial, accurate information is taught; disciplinary issues need to be in the best interest of the child based on where they come from; how do we create equitable spaces for students at schools; policy about how students treat others; accountability; schools stay out of my moral space; wants school to address discipline issues; coursework--tell the truth origins of English; teachers handling conversations better now (History)
- Little or no role; politics, race and sexuality; teaching history in an unvarnished manner
- Treat each of the children in a similar manner; no child gets special rights because of their race in terms of how we teach our children; Black Lives Matter posters--makes him uncomfortable; off putting for me as a parent--not appropriate; rethink some of those things
- Helping teachers not to use racial bias; to make school more welcoming for all students; encouragement for teachers when they make a course correction; more books of different races; encouraging teachers
- Fairly good job; checking ourselves now; now we are trying to separate kids by skin color; starts in the house--ABC, 123, leave the rest up to me; the District listens/does a good job

What measures would you use to evaluate student success?

- Thinks the question is phrased wrong; should be the staff, admin, etc.--not students; Ex) are we having conversations with teachers when a student is sent out of the classroom? Are there trends with how the teacher responds to students?

- Compassionate; understand what others might be going through; empathy; ok having uncomfortable conversations; send my kids to school for social skills too; to be part of a larger society; know their history
- Educate our students to be successful; there has to be an outcome; kids of all backgrounds can equally achieve whatever they want to be; the biggest thing that holds students back is their economic background and family structure; Ex) parents not involved typically the students who are struggling
- Teach our students to love their country.
- I needed Curtis to help me; I was a single parent for 25 years; I went to everything; teachers knew me because I was there; behavior issues were mine to deal with at home; I could address any coach, principal, etc.; I could get help from them if needed
- Report cards, progress reports, parent teacher conferences; parent determines if there kid is a good kid; pull my kid out if this is being taught to him.

Community Listening Session Notes – 2/23/22 Group 3

Hosted by Director Maloney

What comes to mind when you think of racial equity?

- Racial equity is a political buzzword, promoting an ideology. The environment that is promoted is one of oppressor vs. oppressed. We're creating/teaching division.
- These questions were posed: Where is this coming from? What is the reason we're having this meeting? My own children were taught it, but don't understand it. Students are being taught it, in my opinion, in school. Is this coming from the unions, from government, from students, from parents? How much time, effort, money has been invested? There should be a focus on ABCs and 1,2,3s.
- Equity is similar to but not the same as equality. The meaning has changed over the last few years due to policies and ideologies. I've been paying attention to UPSD. I know there was training provided to staff and teachers last spring/summer. I examined the curriculum. In the teaching session Teaching Racial Justice in the Classroom by the Equity Literacy Institute they defined equity. According to the documents posted on our website, equity requires redistribution, not mitigation; it is not an add-on program – this is total racism, a terrible thing being taught to teachers and staff. Equity is “dismantling whiteness”. This is ideology coming from academia down. The school district has an anti-racism policy. It's not supposed to look at race. Our district policy is “nondiscrimination”.
- Not all school systems are fair. Racial equity is a little misinterpreted. Kids are different. They're not all equal in how they think. They can take things differently.
- This program is politically motivated. There are programs to educate the educators. 46% are not able to do basic math. Our dollars could be well spent in other areas. Our children don't need to be taught this, and teachers are not well equipped to teach this. What are we trying to do? (question asked by participant) The U.S. is the greatest country in the world. It's made up of all types of people. I have an issue with this focus. I am offended that we don't look at people as a person. 33 kids per class is a lot.
- I feel alone in this entire conversation. I believe we're missing the point on the definition of equity. Racial equity means that my children are represented in the classroom; that they see themselves in our teachers and administrators. We should look at hiring practices. We're missing the point on how we define equity. When people see me, they see color. They see that I'm a black woman. We need to define racial equity.

What is the district's role in achieving racial equity?

- Martin Luther King Jr said (and I believe this district does) we should judge people on the content of their character, not the color of their skin. Anti-racism is cultural Marxism. Anti-racism is terribly unamerican.
- Equity and equality are not the same. We should be merit driven. We should avoid doing anything that is illegal based on race or gender. We should be hiring the best person to do the job, not based on the color of skin.
- The district should get out of the business of racial equity. This has no place in schools. We had the opportunity to get [REDACTED] elected. I will encourage/weed out/roust out anybody who

is trying to teach racial equity. My kids don't see color. I don't see it. I see people as people. I see character.

- I look at people as people, not the color of their skin. I want the best educator. I don't want someone because of the color of their skin.
- I want the same opportunities for all. I would love to see representation for my children. The district should put effort into hiring to get representation (of people of color) so that students can see themselves in the staff and faculty.
- I am concerned as a Korean. There were girls killed in New York, because they were Chinese. I just wanted to hear how the district is teaching about racism.
- It's problematic to categorize people. My wife is white. She didn't see my color. Prior, Curtis had a saying - "work hard and be nice". Curtis High School has a history of valuing work and good treatment of others. "Work hard" is considered white supremacist talk now - racist talk according to the rhetoric of the day. I won't even talk about being nice.

What measures would you use to evaluate student success?

- The 3R's – reading, writing, and arithmetic; Civics education: We don't teach civics any more. We have students graduating who don't understand the constitution, the system of law, etc. How will you know your rights are being violated if you don't know these things? Students need to understand how our system works. We need to teach students how to think, not what to think. We're not measuring the skills that people need to function in society.
- We use standardized tests to evaluate success. This is being taught to students. Tests aren't a fair way to evaluate a student. The number of students in my children's (8th grade) classroom is too much (33). Half of their assignments are being brought home by my kids. The work is not being done in class. The basics are missing. Math looks like it came from Mars. We memorized things. We need to go back to basics.
- We should look at students holistically rather than just grading them. I don't want to remove the grade system, because I think that's important too, but I would like to have more opportunities to converse about how we determine success.

Do you have any final thoughts to share with the board?

- When the superintendent says "We have a long way to go" he is revealing bias – a biased system. We haven't identified the problem (that we are trying to solve). I don't see the problem. I don't want them being influenced by Jay Inslee or Pierce County Health Department. I am looking for a neutral person. I don't want the board and administrators biased that "we have a problem".
- University Place School District's nondiscrimination policy/statement does not align with equity, which is a discriminatory process. How can we have both nondiscrimination and equity? This is inconsistent and confusing. I choose to stand by the non-discrimination statement.
- Thanks to the board for this opportunity to give input before making decisions. My kids have been the targets of racism (the n word, monkey). We all have our own experiences. Maybe we can or cannot relate. I would like to see more equality.
- Equity is not equal to equality.
- Right now [this program] it's not working.
- We have a special needs son who was bullied when he was younger. It was great to see Curtis Junior High and Curtis High School where the other kids rallied around to support him. I hope your kids see the same love my kids saw.

- Overall – it all depends on how we handle our problems. If I see anything wrong with my kids, I deal with it. I go right to the principal. We need to encourage parents to come together in a reunion at school (after the isolation we have experienced) at least on a quarterly basis.
- Participation by parents (at school board meetings) is minimal. I understand that discrimination is out there. Most people are good people. I don't believe in CRT. I don't believe in racial equity. I don't believe in any of it.

Community Listening Session Notes – 2/23/22 Group 4

Hosted by Director Nobles

What comes to mind when you think of racial equity?

- First thing is representation, our daughter goes to Sunset and it is important for her to see teachers that visually represent our daughter who she can relate to.
- Equal access to opportunities and resources is one part of racial equity. That is not always racially different but something to be considered for working or single parents.
- Thinking about the experience of everyone in our schools - students and staff vs. the outcomes. The outcomes are important, but the experience is really important - an equitable feeling of experience. What are the students in my school experiencing? What are my staff experiencing? Good to survey kids and find out how they are feeling about school is important. It is important to think about what kids are feeling at school.
- Corrective justice for communities who have been oppressed through enslavement. In education a lot of school folks don't realize there is an equity problem in education that impacts student outcomes. Equity is focused on dismantling whiteness. We need to think about how in education that prevents historically marginalized students from reaching their full potential.
- I also think about ways to elevate student voices - give authentic opportunities to get their voices heard. Projects that promote civic engagement and talk about ways students can reflect on their experiences. We need to think about a hard look at discipline policies, which disproportionately impact students of color. Look at the curriculum, a lot of our educators are unconsciously endorsing systemic racism by what they teach.
- Safe space for students to share their experience and how they are feeling and agree with previous comment.

What is the district's role in achieving racial equity?

- In the curriculum and what is taught, bringing in different stories that maybe have not been taught in schools before. Thinking about stories that have not been taught.
- It would be nice to see more metrics on teachers, like the discipline efforts, etc. Those files stay with them through their educational system. Are some of the disciplinary actions attributed more to certain teachers than others. Is there work needed on equipping teachers with different tools/highlighting the roles they play in these inequities.
- Make a public declaration expressing the need for equity. For it to have an impact, it has to be stated. That is super important. There needs to be more investments in necessary leadership to lead equity-based work. Grateful for this space and the opportunity to hear from parents and community but it feels like this should be two or 20 different meetings. Measuring student success is constantly evolving.
- It would be helpful if we were able to do more introspective view with some of our educators before we can talk through equity. Do they understand different cultures - American culture may be normed for them, it may not be for everyone? Is there a lens to be culturally agile, to shift perspective? Do our teachers have the ability to see difference, accept difference, and adapt as necessary?
- Sustainability - oftentimes organizations talk about equity and it is a quick shelf life. In my opinion, certain ways that school districts can categorize programs to be more long lasting. Long

lasting investments in hiring, budgeting, would be important when thinking about this. Really also digging into the data is really important - does not reveal root causes - but when properly disaggregated, you can see it a lot. Using the data to tell the complete story to impact policy development and institutional practice.

What measures would you use to evaluate student success?

- I appreciate you talking about definitions. I think it is important that we have defined terms when we are talking about racial equity. In my organization, this is something we talk about a lot - how do we define these terms and how are they applicable and accessible to others so that we can see the work we do in the community and county as a whole.
- A question I have - I want more visibility on what is used today, currently to measure success.
- I would love to see when we are measuring student success focusing on growth and not standards. We know children are not standard - I would love to see our district focus on growth of students from A/B vs. did you meet the standard that was set based on your grade level/age.

Do you have any final thoughts to share with the board?

- I would be curious to hear what your definition of success is. And then to do some community engagement to see how they can be partnered. I believe community partnerships and engagement help to build trust and community so that could be helpful.
- I was wondering if testing methods have changed? Is the district looking into how other districts have modified their testing methods to better look at outcomes?
- It is important to capture experiences. My daughter is at Curtis and she shared with me today that there has not yet been an acknowledgement of black history month. There has been an acknowledgement by teachers of highlighting voices that felt performative. Maybe a survey to capture experience and impact. We can learn a lot from student voices.
- The board’s role is to have an authentic space. What have any of the schools done for black history month? About representation, I have a 3rd grader at UPP and I don’t think there are a lot of black teachers. Just found out my daughter’s counselor is black. - is whoever is in charge of hiring black teachers doing that. This meeting feels performative, it does not feel authentic.
- What was the thought process that went into the black history dialog or lack thereof. My third grader is learning a lot about Vikings, etc. I am not sure there has been any other discussions on black history this month. Current events related to black history - engineers, scientists in the last five years, etc. We can be creative and there are a lot of prominent black people doing great things in the last 5-10 years.
- Are we cultivating an authentic space in our district?
- At our school we have an equity team and we meet and we have focused on things we can do for black history month, women’s history month, etc. Would love to see a more open dialog about what other schools are doing, what is our district doing. And then, I would like to get feedback from families. Did we amplify voices? Would like to get that feedback on impact so that we can build a partnership. Maybe that is something that the board can facilitate - that would be valuable. More open dialog around what schools are doing and partnership.
- Responded to another panelist’s question about what they do at their school, Was there coordination in our district regarding Black History months?: Ex: Highlight in our morning announcements for students, and to highlight Black voices/figures in science, sports, etc. We also have a virtual read aloud library where we try to highlight lots of different perspectives. We also pull from a website that offers free articles that hits current issues - example youth of color

manifesting MLK’s dream. Do have concerns that our curriculum does highlight white contributions in history. We also did a survey to all of our families to ask what holidays they celebrate to make sure we know what families in our community celebrate. Ex, we also have tried to breakdown whitewashed stories regarding Thanksgiving.

- Are exit interviews done when staff leave so that we can hear about their experiences? I know staff and admin of color have left the district during my student’s time here.
- I wonder about a parent board - not elected - that the district can take info to and get feedback on.
- What mandatory trainings are school staff participating in (antiracism, implicit bias, et)
- I would love to see this happen with the board more. I don’t know if this happens consistently or just during Black history month. I am eager to know if this is just now or if this happens consistently.

Community Listening Session Notes – 2/23/22 Group 5

Hosted by Director Peloquin

What comes to mind when you think of racial equity?

- Being uncomfortable in discussing uncomfortable things. Discussing uncomfortable things, good and bad, improves us. We need to be realistic about the past and consider both shared and individual histories.
- In a school, I think of fair and impartial treatment of all students so that each student can reach their potential.
- Students getting what they need in order to be successful and to be in an environment where they are understood. Be in a place where we have more systems to remove as much bias as possible. One thing that comes to mind as a special interest to me is special education and student discipline.
- Everyone wants opportunities and access to what they need as an individual - each individual one. When you put race in front of it, it can be confusing because it doesn't define people's hopes and dreams.
- One word that comes to mind is inclusivity, making sure that everyone is included. The district staff should be sensitive to the issue and looking for instances that they might otherwise miss.

What is the district's role in achieving racial equity?

- Discrimination is insidious and you have to look for it specifically. If personnel are sensitive to equity issues they can recognize and fix such inequities.
- Be a role model. Look at staffing by racial category. Admin or teachers could better reflect the student population. This is hard and takes time, but you must recruit to find qualified people.
- Discipline - make sure that it is handed out fairly in terms of behavior, not race, social or economic status.
- Be sensitive to perceived inequities and seek them out.
- Actively recruit a more diverse group for staff members. The staff doesn't reflect the population.
- I think that equity committees and some of the work that is being done is good. You can tailor it to "your" kids if the work is done at the school level.
- Track discipline and don't let things fall through the cracks.
- Retention of staff once recruited is important. The district has helped make it a major focus, which makes equity work easier. I hope that the work takes the burden off the staff of color who are defaulted to in terms of student placement or representation in this work.
- I hope that the broad nature of the work doesn't let us rest or become complacent. We need to stay accountable to continue the work and that they have a tangible outcome for students and staff.
- Behavior and discipline disproportionality should be monitored across schools. It's confusing when kids move between grade bands and then find that they are suspended (different expectations). Adultification is put on the kids, meaning that staff are less tolerant of behaviors in high school than they were for those behaviors in primary or intermediate school.
- It's important to identify where equity is lacking by things like behavior. Foster kids are most impacted by exclusion. They make up 10.5% of the discipline and we should pay attention to

intersectionality of categories. Students with disabilities have disproportionate discipline. Homeless students also have disproportionate discipline. These are all students facing trauma and are over-disciplined.

- The larger group that are more suspended are native populations.
- The district could be more proactive about helping families identify resources if they need them. If I asked, I got resources. If I was not comfortable talking to staff I would have not gotten support.
- Disruptive kids may not be considered for Highly capable programs but may be intelligent. We should be able to be proactive in such cases.
- It's important to make sure that students are not overlooked because of economic reasons. Students should be able to participate in fun activities, such as sports, music, swimming. Make sure people are aware, be proactive.
- Make sure that bias isn't a factor in things. Help people be aware of their own biases.
- The district was great to invite all students to participate in the highly capable testing. Kids might be overlooked if they are not aware that anyone can nominate.
- Teachers that challenge kids and held me accountable are the ones that impacted my life.
- Scholarships that had race designations or different qualifications (affirmative action) seem inappropriate and discriminatory.
- The district definition from training "requires a redistribution of opportunity." I think that is wrong if done in ways that is discriminatory.
- One role is to provide innovative education opportunities since traditional educational models may not serve all students. I'd love to see innovative models.
- Not every kid is going to a four year college, make sure they have training for other options and offer interventions earlier. Catch them in middle school and offer non-traditional options/career paths.

What measures would you use to evaluate student success?

- That's tough because what is success? Everyone has a different idea. Mine is that the school would produce a productive, employable citizen. Whether that's skills, trade school or college. They need skills for employment upon graduation. Talk to them after graduation to find out how they were helped or hindered.
- We could measure what we don't do...How many don't end up in prison? Discipline is often the start of a pathway that can be measured and monitored. We could see disproportionate discipline decreasing. We could retain students who are leaving to go to other school districts.
- Success is a progression, don't wait until it's too late. We need to measure early. Certain successful skills like reading by third grade.
- Talking to students after graduation (1-2 years). Looking at students who need to take remedial courses in high school. What percent of kids take remedial courses?
- A mastery program where students don't move on to the next level until they have mastered it.

Do you have any final thoughts to share with the board?

- Segregation is wrong, and students with special needs are still segregated.

Re:UPSD School Board Listening Session – February 23, 2022

Tue, Feb 22, 2022 at 2:56 PM

To: cydstie@upsd83.org

Cc: [REDACTED]

Thank you, Courtney, for making it possible to provide written responses.

1. What comes to mind when you think of racial equity?

Though we know that race is a social construct and not biologically proven, there is still a disparity often times that exists in the way that people of different skin colors are treated. And so it is the job of organizations and individuals to create equal opportunities to people of all skin colors, ethnicities, etc. It should be noted, not equal outcomes necessarily, but equal opportunities for people of all colors to enter into discussion, opportunities, positions, etc. It might not turn out that people of all colors wind up with the same outcomes, that cannot be guaranteed, but chance or entrance of possibilities should be examined. This would include in clubs, access to resources in the classroom, parental inclusion, job positions, etc. It needs to be across the board that people of all colors are allowed and welcomed to join in.

2. What is the district's role in achieving racial equity? The role is substantial in the fact that students' future opportunities weigh heavily on how their education and community involvement plays out in their younger years. When I look back at what impact my K-12 years brought to me as I entered college and the workforce, it is undeniable that it is critical children receive an equitable playing field to start with. So when the district reviews its policies it is crucial to make sure children, parents, community members and employees are not seen through a certain lens of skin color and that no preference is given based in color, consciously and subconsciously.

3. What measures would you use to evaluate student success?

4. Do you have any final thoughts to share with the board?

One suggestion I have in any application process (clubs, employment, etc.) that things such as race, gender, names, etc be redacted so that there be an equal playing field for all applicants. Decisions would not be made in (subconscious) bias against or for any people due to the discrimination of their name or past involvements which would indicate racial background. This way, people's achievements, passions, and goals would shine - not a defining racial group.

We need to be careful not to make race the end-all-be-all of decisions and create reverse racism by making decisions based on skin color and indicating factors. Yes, we should provide equal access, but never put any certain race(s) about another/others as criterion to enter into resources. To allow a certain color of skin more access is racism itself.

Thank you,

[REDACTED] parent of [REDACTED]

On Wed, Feb 16, 2022, 8:55 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

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February 23 Listening Session

FACE Committee [REDACTED]

Fri, Feb 18, 2022 at 9:01 AM

To: eburke@upsd83.org, mpeloquin@upsd83.org, tnobles@upsd83.org, mdickinson@upsd83.org, rmaloney@upsd83.org

Cc: "Chamberlin, Jeff" <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>, "Ydstie, Courtney" <cydstie@upsd83.org>

Dear UPSD Board:

Thank you for hosting another listening session on racial equity and student success next week. The Chambers FACE committee is very invested in this work and we're looking forward to attending.

We'd like to thank the board and the district for the work that's been done over the past few years on this issue. We've seen the good that an empowered equity team has been able to do at Chambers and like to think that the other schools in our district are having similar success with theirs.

Our committee was reflecting on the previous listening session that took place last March. We know this event is intended to be the board listening to the community, but we think it would be helpful if you could begin the conversation with some information about what's been done with the feedback you received last year, and how the board will be using the feedback from the current meeting. It would also be helpful to hear how the racial equity initiative is progressing.

We also request that the board reiterate the district's commitment to racial equity and the racial equity statement before the listening session starts.

I've attached the email our committee sent as feedback after last year's meeting, in case you might find that useful. We look forward to coming together next week to discuss this crucial issue.

Thanks,
Chambers Primary FACE Committee

 **3-24 Listening Session followup comments.docx**
18K

April 4, 2021

Thank you for offering the listening session on March 24. We appreciated the opportunity to speak to you about our experiences as University Place school families, and our wishes for how the district goes forward. We absolutely support the district's Racial Equity Initiative and are eager to contribute to its success. The Family And Community Engagement (FACE) committee of the Chambers PTA has been prioritizing work and discussions around racial equity issues this year and a half dozen of us attended.

We had some concerns about the way the conversations ended up going. We do wish that the Board had re-stated its position on racial equity and kept conversation in line with its stated goals of promoting student success and student equity in the district. It appeared that in several of the groups a small number of people had an agenda to change the direction of the conversation entirely, objecting to the basic premise of racial equity as a priority for the district; as the rest of the community members tried to follow the format and answer the fairly narrow range of questions, these objections went unchallenged, and we noticed that it seemed to have a silencing effect on some of the people of color in the conversation. While of course we agree that all members of the community should have an opportunity to make their opinions heard by the Board, we feel that the discussion would have been much more productive if the moderators would focus on the stated goals for the evening.

In preparation for the listening session, our committee met and discussed your four questions. We were concerned that the structure of the questions did not really allow for critical discussion; their similarity to each other and the general language also presupposed certain answers. This seemed to be borne out by the discussions at the event. We appreciate your invitation to send more feedback on the subject, as we have some additional thoughts. We've tried to group them in a logical order, even if they don't exactly match the original questions.

To succeed as a competent contributing citizen, what attributes (disposition, skills, and knowledge) should each graduate of UPSD possess?

- Students should have the attributes of cultural humility, self awareness, and self reflection. They should be able to engage in civil discourse and understand their values (and how to apply values to everyday decisions).
- Students should be skilled at self advocacy.
- Students should know factual, unwhitewashed history.
- Students should have knowledge and experiences of diversity, equity and belonging.
- Students should understand that "fairness" comes from equity (all get what they need) rather than equality (all get the same).

What should the district be doing to cultivate competent contributing citizens?

- The district should break the stereotype of a person's importance being based on their level of education or eventual profession, and be sure that students are prepared for life

after high school whether or not that includes higher education. The district should evaluate what tools and methods it is using to accomplish this.

- The district needs to make a critical examination of district and teacher practices, to determine if our BIPOC students are evaluated differently than White students. While the district might not feel that there is any difference, there are students of color who feel otherwise.
- The district should be careful that in the process of promoting multiple paths of postsecondary success, that it makes all paths equally available to all students; i.e., that students of color or students from working class families are not presumptively placed in tracked away from college prep if that's not suitable for the student.
- The district should be sure it's promoting acceptance over tolerance.
- The district should ensure that emotional intelligence is taught alongside intellectual skills, in higher grades as well as primary school.
- The district should provide a clear explanation of the skills assessments as they're currently being administered. What metrics is the district using to measure the whole child?

To contribute to an American society free of all forms of institutional racism, what attributes (disposition, skills, and knowledge) should our graduates possess?

- See the first question, as being a competent contributing citizen means being able to contribute to an American society free of all forms of institutional racism.

What can the district do to prepare our graduates to contribute to an American society free of all forms of institutional racism?

- The district should be making sure people feel valued and that they belong. For example, there are extracurricular activities that happen at high school that exclude people, e.g. the mother/daughter tea. These events don't have to be eliminated, but the district should examine whether there is a continuing reason for exclusionary activities. As part of the event approval process there could be a district review form that requires a description of who the event is for/benefiting, does this support the district's stated goal of racial equity and current values. And then if the answers to questions don't mirror district values, coaching is offered.
- The district should clarify that American society doesn't mean white society; that tradition should not be used as an excuse to exclude.
- The district should encourage cultural humility at all levels (staff and students).

**What do you think the Board should be looking at in evaluating the district's progress?
What do you think the Board should be looking at in evaluating its own progress?**

- The Board should find ways in addition to individual standardized testing to measure school success.

- The Board should be ensuring that the district continues to work toward a goal of positive change as our community and students change, rather than resting on the success of what we've always done.
- The Board should examine the district's hiring practices and retention efforts to ensure that our staff diversity improves and that staff members that support diversity are valued, encouraged and supported in their work.
- The Board should evaluate the district's dedication to equity in all areas, as intersectionality is an important part of anti-racism. As an example, the district website is terrible from an accessibility perspective; the menus are largely unusable from mobile devices, and many of the pages (including the Racial Equity Initiative pages) are simply photos of text. This means that people who access the internet from their phones, or who rely on screen readers, are unable to access important district information that other families can take for granted.
- The Board should evaluate the success of students in different demographics: whether certain groups are being unevenly represented in things like discipline, IEP/504 plans, Highly Capable designations.
- The Board should not let the positive qualities of our "good schools" allow inequities to go unchallenged. For instance, the REI section of the district website mentions how students of color perform better in tests than statewide peers. How does this compare to white student performance compared to statewide peers--presumably that's also higher too. We should also be aiming for a smaller achievement gap in our district than others.
- The Board should look at how teachers use discipline; there should be some sort of method for self-examination when a student is sent out of the classroom for behavior reasons. This may uncover hidden biases.
- The Board should examine how it engages with the community; looking at accessibility issues like language barriers, providing online access to meetings after they resume in person, making materials easily accessible.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. We support the district's racial equity goals and look forward to future collaboration between the board and our committee.

Sincerely,
Chambers Primary FACE Committee

Re: UPSD School Board Listening Session – February 23, 2022

Thu, Feb 24, 2022 at 9:09 AM

[REDACTED]
To: Courtney Ydstie <cydstie@upsd83.org>
Cc: Jeff Chamberlin <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>

This zoom meeting was a total outrage and I and I for one would like to insist on an in person board meeting to redo this meeting specifically quickly as every single moderator later did not share the thoughts of the group accurately and spun this as as every group being pro this program and that absolutely was not the case in any of the groups... The overwhelming majority are completely against teaching racial equity and that was not that was not the sentiment that was shared by each board member at the end of the session and us parents are very upset about this. In almost every group there were maybe 2 or 3 people that were pro racial equity teaching and the overwhelming majority were against it but that is not what you would have thought listening to the Board member share thoughts from their group at the end. This was completely spun and you guys forced a narrative that was not accurate and it is completely outrageous. And why is there a sitting senator on the board? the majority of parents are not OK with having a politician on the board. Many parents from the groups spoke on the phone last night afterwards and shared these thoughts and you will be getting more messages like this I can assure you... And we will be taking appropriate actions to expose this atrocity.

On Mon, Feb 14, 2022, 4:01 PM Courtney Ydstie <cydstie@upsd83.org> wrote:

Dear UPSD Parents and Guardians:

The UPSD Board of Directors would like to invite interested parents to a board listening session on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 6:30 PM. The purpose of this listening session is to hear from parents and community members about how the district can best promote student success and racial equity.

The event will begin with a short presentation from the school board about their goals for the listening session. Next, participants will be assigned to a virtual "breakout room", where they can share their thoughts and ideas with a board member.

The discussion will focus on these four questions:

1. What comes to mind when you think of racial equity?
2. What is the district's role in achieving racial equity?
3. What measures would you use to evaluate student success?
4. Do you have any final thoughts to share with the board?

The listening session will be virtual via the Zoom platform. To register for this event, [click here](#).

Thank you.

[UPSD School Board Listening Session Flyer](#)

University Place School District 83 would like to continue connecting with you via email. If you prefer to be removed from our list, please contact University Place School District 83 directly. To stop receiving all email messages distributed through our SchoolMessenger service, follow this link and confirm: [Unsubscribe](#)

SchoolMessenger is a notification service used by the nation's leading school systems to connect with parents, students and staff through voice, SMS text, email, and social media.

UPSD Board Listening Session - Group 4 Meeting Notes

Thu, Feb 24, 2022 at 4:49 PM

[REDACTED]
To: "Ydstie, Courtney" <cydstie@upsd83.org>

Thank you Courtney.

I must say that feedback I heard last night from other groups was very concerning. I would encourage your team when looking to do breakout sessions again to authentically lead with mutual respect, inclusivity and aim to establish a safe space that is safe enough for people to speak their minds, and have those voices heard. The quality of conversation and the desired output would be greatly improved.

I recently read a LinkedIn article about DEI trainings. It highlighted and echoed sentiments I hear from white colleagues and colleagues who don't identify as white. Many white colleagues will stare, bored and unwilling to participate in breakout groups, even in smaller settings with their own colleagues. I felt similarly about last night's meeting. I have the feeling that the thoughts, questions and requests won't receive true follow up (I hope they do) and for some, this was a meeting that someone made a commitment to, will soon be forgotten and is checking a box.

For community members, parents and staff, situations like these are a grueling process that stirs and evokes sentiments and leads to experiencing additional microaggressions from a larger, mixed group. There is usually a small amount, or one person of color who is in the group, or a small breakout group, uncomfortable with an unspoken expectation from the group to nicely explain the issues they have with race that don't disrupt the status quo, to minimize the damage that institutional racism has on our community as a whole. This distress I imagine is unintentional and unexplored.

I appreciate the efforts and intent the District made in addressing racial equity and student success. However, as an organization you cannot ignore the impact these conversations can have and the unintended consequences, especially for people who identify within the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) community. Most if not all understand all too well microaggressions, and racism at every level and interaction in their lives. Being uncomfortable is one thing, but there were attendees who experienced racism in some of the breakout rooms. That was saddening and upsetting to hear. I am grateful that was not my experience. Consequences like that may be more detrimental and often BIPOC people do not have support systems in place to process the emotional toll a conversation in a predominately white space will evoke. Not to mention the lack of trust moving forward with those individuals.

I work in public health and we have many conversations and planning around the ongoing toll of our dual pandemics – racism and COVID. They have led to a public health and economic crisis that makes achieving educational equity even more difficult. At schools in our County, and this District, school shut downs and online learning degraded racial disparities. One study showed that, as a result, students of color were an additional three to five months behind in math, while white students were one to three months behind. It would be interesting to see how UPSD numbers look.

I'll end just hoping there is more work done thinking about the ways you engage with parents and community through an equity lens especially when hoping for change and transformation. I hope parents and community continue to show up and demonstrate the resilience they unfortunately have to show in so many other areas of their lives.

I would also encourage you to invest in support of experts when having these sorts of conversations with community.

I am happy to provide a list of recommendations should you find that helpful.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: Ydstie, Courtney <cydstie@upsd83.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2022 4:05 PM
To: T'wina Nobles <tnobles@upsd83.org>; Lainey Mathews <lmathews@upsd83.org>
Cc: Jeff Chamberlin <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>
Subject: UPSD Board Listening Session - Group 4 Meeting Notes

CAUTION: External Email

Hello,

Thank you for attending the UPSD School Board Listening Session on February 23, 2022. I have attached the meeting notes from Group 4, hosted by Director Nobles for your review.

It is important to the Board of Directors that everyone's thoughts were captured in the breakout session conversations. Please review the attached notes from your group to ensure your feedback was accurately reflected. If you do not feel like your comment was recorded as you intended, please respond to this email by March 1, 2022.

Additionally, if you were unable to share all of your thoughts on the questions during the breakout session please feel free to send additional written testimony to me by March 1, 2022. I will be compiling the notes, as well as all written testimony received, for the Board to review before their next meeting on March 9th. I will send all participants an advanced copy of the compiled notes by March 8, 2022.

Thank you again for your participation,

Courtney Ydstie

Courtney Ydstie

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

University Place School District

253-566-5600 x 3312

Pronouns: She/Her

This is a staff email account managed by University Place School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

UPSD Board Listening Session - Group 3 Meeting Notes

Fri, Feb 25, 2022 at 1:01 PM

To: Rick Maloney <rmaloney@upsd83.org>, Angie Franklin <afranklin@upsd83.org>, "Ydstie, Courtney" <cydstie@upsd83.org>
Cc: Jeff Chamberlin <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>

Good Afternoon,

First, Courtney, thank you so much to you and your planning efforts of putting together a (difficult in less obvious ways) event to allow the UPSD Board the opportunity to listen to UPSD parents and community members as they share their thoughts, feedback, opinions, and observations of racial equity. There's a lot of work behind the scenes that goes into creating these events, so thank you!

President Maloney and Ms. Franklin did a great job of listening, taking notes, and allowing a space for *all* to have the chance to speak in an environment that was very much hostile and uncomfortable. **If I can make a request for next time, should this opportunity present itself again, please consider and implement the district and board bringing in mediators who can facilitate the racist confrontations and conversations that take place in groups similar to mine when discussing Race and Equity.**

I understand that placing folks in a virtual room, who have various opinions on race, politics, and life will likely produce emotional conversations. Most of the individuals in our group chose to leave their cameras off and did not participate in the conversations that were had, and, honestly, I don't blame them. But, I respectfully refused to sit quiet to allow others who do not share my views, provide only their POV and narratives.

I do wish to provide additional testimony to the overall notes that were shared as I don't feel I was emotionally prepared for what took place on Wednesday. And, honestly, I was completely caught off-guard by the responses of my group members. I understand the group breakouts are randomly selected, but to be randomly placed in a group that directly and indirectly expressed their racist views towards me and folks who look like me, triggered and traumatized me. I actually got emotional on camera, but luckily the lighting in my room and the low-quality camera hide that from others. I am a black woman going against parents of all colors who would NEVER want their child to walk in the shoes of our Black, Brown, and Indigenous children -- the shoes they walk in, not specifically at our schools everywhere, but in this racist world.

With that said, I believe representation is *very* important at our schools. I received much backlash when mentioning this, as though I was promoting affirmative action. The parent(s) who disagreed with me said, "I want the best educator. I don't want someone because of the color of their skin". This blatant statement eludes to the fact that people of color are not qualified to teach in our schools or lead within our district! **So, I challenge the district to review their recruitment/hiring/retention practices to see if there's discrimination or gatekeeping of any sort within the job descriptions, hiring practices, and positions acquired which would cause people of color to not apply, accept, or stay. I challenge the district, that when hiring people of color, to strategize effective ways to retain the teachers of color and admin of color.** The point is, there are well-qualified and highly recommended Indigenous/people of color who can teach in our schools, but for many reasons, known and unknown, they are not being recruited, hired, or retained. **The parents at Wednesday's meeting aren't questioning representation in our schools because our teacher/admin look like and represent their children!**

I challenge the district to continue Racial Equity Initiatives (REI) and trainings and the introduction of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) trainings for all within the district. Also, our children are quite bright, resilient, and powerful change-makers, so I challenge you to implement, not only STI into the curriculum, but DEI and REI, as well. I know a deeper and longer conversation that includes complex steps. This doesn't create racism (it already exists), but rather advocacy, change, and a chance for our students understanding of the world around them, which can be monopolized. One of the parents said, "When the Superintendent says, 'We have a long way to go', he is revealing bias - a biased system". *I 100% disagree.* This work is dirty, gritty, exhaustive, emotional, and of vital importance to our changing communities and the populations we serve. Not everyone will agree with the work, but the work is needed and worth it!

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide clarification and additional feedback. I appreciate the work and change UPSD is making by simply allowing parents, like myself, share our thoughts and ideas. **I truly hope my words will be taken into consideration and action.**

Best,

On Thursday, February 24, 2022, 04:06:48 PM PST, Ydstie, Courtney <cydstie@upsd83.org> wrote:

Hello,

Thank you for attending the UPSD School Board Listening Session on February 23, 2022. I have attached the meeting notes from Group 3, hosted by Director Maloney for your review.

It is important to the Board of Directors that everyone's thoughts were captured in the breakout session conversations. Please review the attached notes from your group to ensure your feedback was accurately reflected. If you do not feel like your comment was recorded as you intended, please respond to this email by March 1, 2022.

Additionally, if you were unable to share all of your thoughts on the questions during the breakout session please feel free to send additional written testimony to me by March 1, 2022. I will be compiling the notes, as well as all written testimony received, for the Board to review before their next meeting on March 9th. I will send all participants an advanced copy of the compiled notes by March 8, 2022.

Thank you again for your participation,

Courtney Ydstie

Courtney Ydstie
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
University Place School District
253-566-5600 x 3312
Pronouns: She/Her

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UPSD Board Listening Session - Group 2 Meeting Notes

Mon, Feb 28, 2022 at 4:17 PM

To: "Ydstie, Courtney" <cydstie@upsd83.org>, Mary Lu Dickinson <mdickinson@upsd83.org>, Eric Brubaker <ebrubaker@upsd83.org>

Cc: Jeff Chamberlin <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>

Thank you for your follow up on the listening session. I understand that listening to lots of voices with various views can be a challenge. I would recommend to the school district that future listening sessions have the sessions recorded and notes be taken from the recordings rather than notes taken on the fly. There was a significant quality difference in the reports from the different school board members and I think this can only lend itself to distortion.

Clarification on my comments on question 1:

What comes to mind when we discuss racial equity? I wonder whether we are talking about equal access or are we talking about equal outcomes. All students should have equal access no matter what their race. All students should be allowed to excel!

If racial equity is about equal outcomes, then I'm not sure how this possible and still have excellence as a goal. If equal outcome is THE priority, then excellence will have to be sacrificed because high achievers (if they come from one racial group) will have to be brought back down to the mean. At the same time, there may be unofficial pressure to advance those who meet a demographic who are underperforming.

Equal opportunity and access should be the goal of the school. Any student who is underperforming should have helps available to him/her.

Clarification on my comments on question 2:

What is the role of UPSD in promoting racial equity? Again, if access is the issue, then please promote equal access. If it is outcome, almost surely this will turn into a political mess and will negatively impact the school district.

Treat students as students. Everyone has value because they are part of UPSD. Focusing on differences will only show case differences and create tension.

One specific issue I brought up that was not mentioned in the recap during the Zoom meeting was that I am opposed to the Black Lives Matter signs in virtually every classroom. Why is it that a leftist political organization gets to advertise in our High School? Further, I mentioned during the Zoom meeting (not reflected in the notes or recap) that BLM is under investigation for fraud in Washington and California. I find it hard to believe that an organization that tends to lean to the right (NRA, Pro-life group) would be allowed to put banners in classes.

Again, I thank you for your time in listening to the community. It is not an easy job and I appreciate your efforts.

████████████████████

UPSD Board Listening Session - Group 3 Meeting Notes

Tue, Mar 1, 2022 at 4:30 AM

To: "Ydstie, Courtney" <cydstie@upsd83.org>, Rick Maloney <rmaloney@upsd83.org>, Angie Franklin <afranklin@upsd83.org>
Cc: Jeff Chamberlin <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>

Courtney,

Thank you for your follow-up. My comments/corrections are listed below. Please include my unedited comments in the record, thank you.

[REDACTED], Parent of UPSD Students and Graduates

Deeds, not words

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

What comes to mind when you think of racial equity?

Neo-racist theories have no place in public education. Critical Race Theory (CRT) teaches children to hate each other and hate their country.

Critical Race Theory teaches children that they are defined by their race, not as individuals.

Critical Race Theory says the solution to past discrimination is present discrimination. I reject this. Racism is always wrong. I oppose racism, whether it comes from the Klan or from Critical Race Theory.

Critical Race Theory teaches that individualism, rationality, and hard work are racist. This is an insult to hard-working American families of all racial backgrounds.

We must prioritize excellence, which inspires people from all racial backgrounds to achieve their potential. Our goal should be diversity without division.

Public institutions must reflect the values of the public—not fringe racial theories that seek to divide Americans into oppressor and oppressed.

What is the district's role in achieving racial equity?

Parents are challenging the entire premise of pushing this “racial equity” initiative. We should first be asking: Is it appropriate for the district have any role in “achieving racial equity”?

Why is anyone presuming the district should be promoting this initiative? First, parents should decide if this is even an appropriate initiative for the board to be promulgating.

Why weren't parents consulted BEFORE this initiative was proposed?

How, EXACTLY, is “racial equity” defined? Everyone must have a common understanding of the definition.

Words mean things. Do the promoters mean equality of opportunity, or equality of outcome? Those are two completely different things.

“Racial equity,” by design, is a nebulous, completely subjective term.

Who is funding & promoting this initiative? What taxpayer funds are being spent on this?

What promotional material is being used, and produced/disseminated by whom?

The district should be committed to preventing programs that stereotype, scapegoat, or demean people on the basis of race.

What measures would you use to evaluate student success?

We should be talking about and aiming at excellence, a common standard that challenges people of all backgrounds to achieve their full potential. On the scale of desirable ends, excellence beats diversity every time. Similarly, in addition to pointing out the dishonesty of the historical narrative on which Critical Race Theory is predicated, we must promote the true story of America—a story that is honest about injustices in American history, but that places them in the context of our nation's high ideals and the progress we have made towards realizing them.

It is well-proven: Americans who follow the so-called success sequence—graduating from high school, getting married before having children, and working full-time at any occupation— have a 98 percent chance of living above the poverty line as adults. Critical Race Theorists have denounced each step in the success sequence as inherently oppressive, but the evidence is clear: The success sequence works better than any real-world alternative, including for poor and minority families.

Our School Board should reject the tenets of Critical Race Theory and orient public policy toward rebuilding the institutions of family, education, and work for Americans of all racial backgrounds. True equality will be achieved by maximizing the ability of Americans to become self-sufficient, not by dividing Americans on the basis of race and apportioning resources based on skin color. Citizens who believe in a system of individual rights, private property, achievement-based advancement, and equal protection under the law must reject the seductive, but ultimately destructive, philosophy of Critical Race Theory. In reality, the program of “antiracism” would deepen racial divisions, not transcend them; even worse, it would undermine the very institutions that are essential to addressing

poverty and inequality in America. The better approach is to strengthen the foundations of the “success sequence,” which is a proven solution to poverty for Americans of all racial groups.

Do you have any final thoughts to share with the board?

The district (ultimately, the taxpayers) will be facing massive anti-discrimination lawsuits because these CRT initiatives are direct violations of UPSD’s anti-discrimination policies, the Washington State Constitution and Federal law. CRT-based programs violate the First Amendment (which protects citizens from compelled speech), the Fourteenth Amendment (which provides equal protection under the law), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which prohibits public institutions from discriminating on the basis of race). CRT promotes three ideas—race essentialism, collective guilt, and neo-segregation — which violate the basic principles of equality and justice. Critical Race Theorists have the right to express their beliefs as individuals; they do not have the right to use taxpayer money to indoctrinate children. Critical Race Theory rejects the idea of equal protection under the law. I believe everyone has the right to equal treatment, no matter where they come from.

“In simple terms, Critical Race Theory reformulates the old Marxist dichotomy of oppressor and oppressed, replacing the class categories of bourgeoisie and proletariat with the identity categories of White and Black. But the basic conclusion is the same: in order to liberate man, society must be fundamentally transformed through moral, economic, and political revolution.”

History of Critical Race Theory: “It is an academic discipline, formulated in the 1990s, built on the intellectual framework of identity-based Marxism. Relegated for many years to universities and obscure academic journals, over the past decade it has increasingly become the default ideology in our public institutions. It has been injected into government agencies, public school systems, teacher training programs, and corporate human resources departments in the form of diversity training programs, human resources modules, public policy frameworks, and school curricula.”

Critical Race Theorists, masters of language construction (Words are important.), realize that “neo-Marxism” would be a hard sell. Equity, on the other hand, sounds non-threatening and is easily confused with the American principle of equality. But the distinction is vast and important... In contrast to equality, equity as defined and promoted by Critical Race Theorists is little more than reformulated Marxism.

Critical race guru Ibram X. Kendi, who directs the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University, “In order to truly be antiracist, you also have to truly be anti-capitalist.” In other words, identity is the means and Marxism is the end.

I have included references to be added to the public record and wish the links to be made available to parents and the public.

This video-essay explores the intellectual history of Critical Race Theory, how it’s devouring America’s public institutions, and what parents can do to fight this racism & Marxism.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfmpnGV0IGc>

<https://www.city-journal.org/christopher-rufo-on-woke-education>

From: Ydstie, Courtney <cydstie@upsd83.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2022 4:05 PM
To: Rick Maloney <rmaloney@upsd83.org>; Angie Franklin <afranklin@upsd83.org>
Cc: Jeff Chamberlin <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>
Subject: UPSD Board Listening Session - Group 3 Meeting Notes

Hello,

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Thank you again for your participation,

Courtney Ydstie

Courtney Ydstie

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

University Place School District

253-566-5600 x 3312

Pronouns: She/Her

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UPSD Board Listening Session - Group 3 Meeting Notes

Wed, Mar 2, 2022 at 8:24 AM

[REDACTED]
To: "Ydstie, Courtney" <cydstie@upsd83.org>

Good morning Courtney,

I apologize, in my mind we had until March 3rd to reply. I just wanted to add a comment for the record. I trust that will still be ok and thank you in advance.

One thing I've observed in person, in our community, our schools, kids, national and local news and now in our school district here in UP, in nutshell, race and racism is being taught from the top down. I understand there is no 100%, but in general every observation and conversation I have regarding the subject people are asking where does this concern come from.

In the majority of situations people are looking around wondering why this is even a discussion. In almost every situation, certainly in UPSD it is not being taught at home, so where is it being taught? The news or the schools.

I am not saying people do not experience racial issues, all races, colors and religions experience some bias but it is not an overwhelming problem in UPSD so please STOP and don't make it one.

I am calling on the board to look at themselves, look at each other. Who is pushing this to be part of our education system? They don't belong here or in any school system. If anyone is pushing a personal agenda the board needs to weed them out or the parents will. AS a community we are on high alert for personal bias and anti American sentiment. Racial equity and CRT do not belong in our schools. BLM posters do not belong in a principals office, black PTA should not be supported on school grounds or with UPSD funds. All of this is the definition of discrimination. STOP IT. Focuses on the kids fundamental education, leave the race education to the parents. WE don't want your opinion on race being inflicted on our kids. Any board member or Administrator who supports race equity or CRT needs to resign. The parents are organizing against this blatant discrimination and our eyes are wide open looking for abusers. The board and Administration should be policing themselves. If there is a board member or Administrator who is always defaulting to this topic, they need to go, that is not what UPDS is about.

From: Ydstie, Courtney <cydstie@upsd83.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2022 4:05 PM
To: Rick Maloney <rmaloney@upsd83.org>; Angie Franklin <afranklin@upsd83.org>
Cc: Jeff Chamberlin <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>
Subject: UPSD Board Listening Session - Group 3 Meeting Notes

Hello,

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

Fwd: Follow up

Chamberlin, Jeff <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>
To: Courtney Ydstie <cydstie@upsd83.org>

Wed, Mar 2, 2022 at 1:29 PM

fyi

Jeff Chamberlin
Superintendent
University Place School District
(253) 566-5600

----- Forwarded message -----

From [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, Feb 25, 2022 at 3:04 PM
Subject: Follow up
To: <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>
Cc: <rmaloney@upsd83.org>, <mpeloquin@upsd83.org>, <tnobles@upsd83.org>, <mdickinson@upsd83.org>, <eburke@upsd83.org>

Greetings,

I attended the board meeting the other night and had a few follow up things I wanted to say.

First of all thank you for listening to us, although I did feel that some things that were said were misrepresented or not represented at all in the end. The end summation by the board felt very slanted and, from what I observed, there were many concerned parents who were outspoken with their opinions and very against this, but their opinions were not relayed adequately at the end.

I stated that I believe this is all political ideology and is divisive. Watching the meeting confirmed exactly that and I feel even more strongly that this is just dividing people. Perhaps that is the goal?

In my group, [REDACTED] stated that she felt racial equity is defined as representation in the classroom and administrators, and her kids seeing themselves in the teachers and in the administration. She stated her kids just "see a lot of white teachers" (direct quote). And she has a problem with that and there not being as many teachers/administrators as she would like to have for her kids. Wow! That is racist! Imagine a white person saying that about black teachers/administrators, and someone saying "all my kids see are black teachers"! She also talked about how focused she is on seeing people's color. Again, what a racist thing to say and imagine a white person saying that!

At the end Twina said her group talked about "dismantling whiteness". (Again, racist!) What if a person said let's talk about "dismantling blackness". Everything she stated at the end is CRT. The ideas from Ibram Kendi are racist, idiotic and perverse and it has no place in our schools!

Making sure that each child is given the opportunities that they need to be their own kind of success should be the districts only focus. I'm aware that UP has a board dedicated to racial equity and has already been implementing racial equity training for teachers and staff. In your ELI training it says: "Equity requires a redistribution- not a mitigation, not an add-on program, but a *redistribution of access and opportunity*." Does this mean that the school district is going to take away access and opportunity from some kids and give it to others using skin color as the sole factor for determining who loses and who gains access and opportunities? It is discriminatory to make determinations about how much help, attention, opportunity, focus, or funding is given or withheld from children based on their skin tone alone. The districts job is to look at each individual child with their own unique needs and circumstances and plot the best path forward that will teach that child how to

navigate and overcome challenges and utilize their gifts to become their own vision of success. The theory that students of color do better around other students and teachers of color seem to be negated by studies and statistics. Only 2% of teachers are Asian American, yet Asian students are continually among the highest performers in both k-12 and higher education. This seems to be more about culture and values. The schools' job is to provide our children with an education which prepares them for success in their next venture after school. Test scores and performance is what matters.

I'm curious, what is the end goal with these parental listening school board meetings? You've already started implementing "racial equity" into curriculum. So was this meeting under the guise of getting "parental input" but really to continue expanding your curriculum? Teaching children how to "dismantle their whiteness"? Please advise. These politically motivated racist theories should not be taught!

On another note, Twina Nobles as a Senator and Board member, has promoted and allowed someone else to promote groups and get together that are racially segregated. Twina needs to step down from the school board as this is all very political and this is a conflict of interest.

Sincerely,



Sent from my iPhone

Info and questions from Equity listening session

Wed, Mar 2, 2022 at 8:48 PM

[REDACTED]
To: "cydstie@upsd83.org" <cydstie@upsd83.org>

Dear Courtney, Please see below my email to Mr. Maloney sent last week. I thought I would provide you a copy as I have not received a confirmation of receipt. Thank you,

Dear Mr. Maloney,

Thanks you for your time and fair reporting of the group at the racial equity listening session on Wednesday and the opportunity to share information and concerns. This email is to provide additional information and to ask questions regarding some of the "work" established in the area of REI. First of all, I am interested in what is the purpose and goal of the listening session since the actions and work on the topic are fully implemented and continually underway? I also would like to reiterate in writing the fact that the REI initiative and many of its practices and in conflict with the school district's non-discrimination statement as well as the anti-discrimination laws of the state of Washington and the US Government. Equality under the law is solid and has served us well to the advancement of minorities.

With out digging much I have uncovered the curriculum via slides produced by faculty at the Equity Literacy Institute which contain blatant radical concepts and ideology of a CRT nature. Quotations from Ibram X Kendi, Kimberle Crenshaw and James Baldwin are utilized to emphasize points. Kimberle Crenshaw is the mother of modern CRT a term she has described as well as coining the term "Intersectionality". CRT is utilized and described in the materials so when I hear from certain board members that CRT is a fabrication of the right winged media I am taken back at the awareness and motives of the board.

Next, I would like to address under the work of REI the recommended reading listing for adults and children posted on the web site. Under the adult category the work of Ibram X Kendi (How to be and Anti-racist) , Ijioma Oluo (So you Want to Talk About Race) and Robin Diangelo (White Fragility) all of them disparage whiteness and white people in the

name of equity and call for reparations to somehow level the playing field. All indicate there is no endgame it is an ongoing process that is never done. These radical ideas if left unchecked will lead to destruction of a society. One book I read in the children's recommendations, is "Not my Idea" by Higginbotham which pits child against parents and equates whiteness to a deal with the devil and calls on children to make a pact. Who allowed this and suggested it's promotion?

This brings me to the REI team established in 2017. Who are they? What are their credentials? Who directs their activity? What specific initiatives are they responsible for? Are just some of the questions.

In the interest of equity, where is the Asian or Hispanic or other POC representation on the board? Where is the fair balance and inclusion of conservative board members? Many black and other POC disagree with the equity initiatives and do not have a voice.

I have mentioned this before, that to have state representatives who have a strong agenda as well as career and financial motives who serve on the board are directly tied in to the initiatives, is not right. The school board should represent the students and parents and be relatively unbiased and not have a hint political influence that could be construed as anything that is not above board.

Lastly, How much money does the school district get for following the equity initiatives passed down from SB 5044? What would they lose and what punishment would they suffer if they didn't follow the SB 5044 and related state directives?

Again thank you allowing communication and your response to the questions.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

UPSD Board Listening Session - Group 2 Meeting Notes

Sun, Mar 6, 2022 at 2:14 PM

Reply-10: [REDACTED]

To: "Ydstie, Courtney" <cydstie@upsd83.org>

Cc: Mary Lu Dickinson <mdickinson@upsd83.org>, Eric Brubaker <ebrubaker@upsd83.org>, Jeff Chamberlin <jchamberlin@upsd83.org>

Hi Courtney,

Apologies in advance for missing the deadline of Feb. 1. If there's any way to get this in the listening session addendum, I'd appreciate it.

1. What comes to mind when you think of racial equity?

Answer: Political and social division. While I think that many people's intentions in this matter are motivated by compassion, I believe that whatever positive intent that previously existed has been hijacked for political purposes. I'm a POC and a child of a colorblind America that up until recently had made great strides in supporting unserved communities. The American left's current obsession with social justice has, in my opinion, set us all back a couple of generations and has set our country down a dark and dangerous path that makes me concerned for my children's futures.

2. What is the district's role in achieving racial equity?

Answer: It should be little or none. Because they are funded by federal, state, and local tax dollars, public schools are government institutions staffed by government workers. Teaching our children the basic skills that are required to be productive citizens shouldn't include any subjects that are rightfully the jurisdiction of parents, including issues of politics, race, and sexuality. I'm in favor of teaching about American history honestly. But I want the board to understand that whatever authority the schools have has been delegated to them by parents, and we can and will rescind that authority when schools misinterpret their proper roles in our children's lives. In an era where homeschooling is becoming increasingly popular, you should stop repeating the tired trope that it takes a village to raise a child--one or two motivated parents can do it just fine, and maybe even better.

3. What measures would you use to evaluate student success?

Answer: We probably all know someone who is stuck in the past and can't create a positive present or future because they can get past their perceived slights and injustices. I want our students to be free of grievance, wherein they consider each other equals and don't view our amazing country in terms of victims and oppressors.

4. Do you have any final thoughts to share with the board?

Answer: I'm old enough to remember an America with much more bigotry than today, but in my experience, most common forms of racism were rapidly becoming extinct, with some notable exceptions of course, until recently. As a POC myself, I've seen actual, overt racism, some in the non-white members of my own family. I have also seen firsthand how that changes. Racism can't and won't be ended in the classroom, boardroom, or courtroom. In my experience, it only ends with time, love, patience, and forgiveness in the hearts of friends, neighbors, and family.

[REDACTED]
----- Original Message -----

On Thursday, February 24th, 2022 at 4:05 PM, Ydstie, Courtney <cydstie@upsd83.org> wrote:

Hello,

Thank you for attending the UPSD School Board Listening Session on February 23, 2022. I have attached the meeting notes from Group 2, hosted by Director Dickinson for your review.

It is important to the Board of Directors that everyone's thoughts were captured in the breakout session conversations. Please review the attached notes from your group to ensure your feedback was accurately reflected. If you do not feel like your comment was recorded as you intended, please respond to this email by March 1, 2022.

Additionally, if you were unable to share all of your thoughts on the questions during the breakout session please feel free to send additional written testimony to me by March 1, 2022. I will be compiling the notes, as well as all written testimony received, for the Board to review before their next meeting on March 9th. I will send all participants an advanced copy of the compiled notes by March 8, 2022.

Thank you again for your participation,

Courtney Ydstie

Courtney Ydstie
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
University Place School District
253-566-5600 x 3312
Pronouns: She/Her

This is a staff email account managed by University Place School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.