

## EQUITY COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes – February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012

In attendance: Dawn Anderson Rascher, Letty Beserra, Bonnie Beechum, Jim Collins, Linda Heiden, Clyde Mayfield, Rachel Mullins, Debra Stevenson, Susan Strodtbeck, Pamela Telsrow, Trish Turner, Jabari Woods

#### Introductions:

New members Jabari Woods and Letty Beserra were introduced.

Jabari Woods is the new Associate Director of Human Resources for the Davenport Community School District. Jabari is a Davenport North High and St. Ambrose University Alumni and was previously with the AEA.

Letty Beserra is the new Admin Assistant in the AERS Dept, a Davenport West High and Western Illinois University Alumni with a Bachelors of Business Degree in Business Management. Welcome new members!

#### New Focus:

Dawn spoke about the many resources currently in place regarding drop-out prevention, such as the Superintendent (Supt) Dropout Task Force, HSGI Grant, Early Warning System and District Staff.

Because there are many resources in place for drop-out prevention, the Supt has asked the Equity Committee focus on closing the Achievement Gap. He states, “We cannot do business as usual. We need out of the box thinking that is **dramatic** and **heroic**.”

#### **The Supt wants an Action Plan submitted, by the committee, by the end of the 2011-2012 school year.**

Because of the short timeline and expectations, there is much work to be done. For the Action Plan to be successful, it must be **REALISTIC, SPECIFIC, AND MEASURABLE**.

Dawn showed a short video about Shaun R. Harper, an associate professor of higher education at University of Pennsylvania and a study he did about achievement in black men and their success in college. The main findings of his study were these men had external factors and influences that appeared to give them a sense that college was not only possible but expected. Among those influences: involved parents with high expectations for them; at least one K-12 teacher who took a personal interest in their academic and personal future and adequate financial support and information regarding payment for college. A link to the video is provided in the body of the email.

#### Discussion:

Concern was immediately made that, while this is an excellent focus, closing the achievement gap has been talked about before, with no action taken. Dawn said then it is this Committee’s responsibility and obligation to make sure this does not happen.

Jabari spoke about the Baltimore Project and the success students had when given the tools and resources needed.

Deb spoke about the success of the Saturday Academy, the involvement with area churches and acknowledged while there is work to be done in the District, closing the achievement gap is possible.

Jim spoke about the possibility some resources and ideas for closing the achievement gap may already be available, and possibly within our District, and this must be considered.

Clyde raised the question about what we in the District have done before regarding the achievement gap, particularly Lincoln and then Madison’s curriculum?

Information was requested on the status and if any reporting is available regarding the HSGI Grant and Kimberly Center. Rachel stated a report was recently made to the board members. A copy is attached to this email. It was

pointed out while the Kimberly Center has been making improvements, it is still in the early stages and a lot of training and exploring is still in progress and more definite results will not yet be available.

The committee requested a copy of the EEOAAP and a status from the Human Resources dept. A copy is attached to this email. Jabari said he would look into the Human Resources side and get back to the committee with this information.

**Homework:**

Dawn distributed 2 documents, “Closing the Achievement Gap” and “Review of Research”. A copy of each document is attached to this email.

Each committee member picked a packet for review and analysis. Each packet contained information on possible resources and ideas regarding closing the achievement gap. Using the “Review of Research” document as a guideline for documenting issues and successful strategies, at our next meeting we will discuss our findings and begin to narrow down our focus.

**Follow-Up:**

Because of the short timeline and expectations, it was agreed in the meeting additional meetings needs to be scheduled. The **next meeting is scheduled for 03-06-12 at The Center from 5pm-7pm.** Letty will send an email with additional info.

**03-06-12 Meeting:**

At the 03-06-12 meeting we will discuss what we think are the main areas of concern regarding the achievement gap. We will then decide which area we want to focus on first. This will be our focus for the next meetings, bringing solutions and suggestions to the table.