

**Meeting with Peter Gorman
August 9, 2007**

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The Superintendent is directed by Board of Education policy ADA to produce an annual equity report. This report was designed to monitor CMS's progress toward equity (by any definition, but especially by the criteria in policy ADA) and inform the budgeting process so that resources could be effectively targeted.

In order for the Equity Report to be useful it must be clear, timely, and accurate. The Equity Report 2005-2006 released by CMS in July 2007 fails on those three measures.

Clarity

The lack of clarity undermines our confidence that staff values equity.

The data in the Equity Report requires significant study (with highlighter and calculator in hand) to grasp data trends and detect what schools meet various standards. In our meeting with staff after the withdrawal of the first version of the Equity Report, we detailed missing graph keys, identification of schools as FOCUS, etc. The revised report still contains pages and pages of check marks, numbers, and percents without color coding, reference to standard, etc.

The lack of clarity makes this report appear to some as a data dump --without relevance to staff decision making. Thus, it raises the question whether staff are looking at the 'big picture' as it relates to equity.

Timeliness

The just released 2005-06 Equity Report is too old to be useful.

- Previously, equity reports were released in January and covered the *current* school year. For instance, the report released in January 2005 concerned the 2004-05 school year. While student achievement data was not available for that school year, all of the other data was current.
- The report concerning the 2005-06 school year *should* have been released in January 2006, not January (or July 2007).
- The Equity Report for 2006-07 should have been released in January 2007. It is imperative that that be given to the Board as soon as possible. This report would have included information on the effects of new initiatives such as 'weighted student staffing.'

- Due in January 2008 is a report showing the initial conditions at schools in the 2007-08 school year. Given the many new initiatives, elimination of assistant principals, etc., it is vital that the BOE have this information before the budget cycle.

Accuracy

Conflicting, inaccurate, and misleading data breeds distrust

- Co-curricular data mixed two different years of data. Year data collected not labeled. Data is inconsistent from page to page.
- Faculty data on the web differ from data in report for same year.
- Faculty data on page 27 of the Strategic Plan 2010 different from data in Equity Report
- Per-Pupil Expenditures by School does not take into account “extras” at certain schools, such as EC teachers/students
- Per-Pupil Expenditures by School does not control for, or highlight small-school effects. This information could make a huge difference in public perception of how funds are allocated. Consider per-pupil expenditures at two small high-wealth schools: Eastover Elementary (23% FRL) and Davidson IB Middle (8% FRL), both have dollars per-pupil expenditures comparable to schools with 90% FRL (Reid Park, JT Williams).

Recommendations

- Present the 2006-07 Equity Report to the BOE in September 2007
- Present the 2007-08 Equity Report to the BOE in January 2008
- Utilize the Equity Committee to evaluate the clarity of report.
- Create clear, accurate reports that can be used to guide staff and Board decisions.