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**District 97 board member Liaison Report**

This report was created and submitted by board members who serve as liaisons to board committees, administrative committees or community organizations. It is a brief summary of the committee or organization’s most recent meeting. It does not serve as or represent official minutes of that meeting.

**Name of the committee/organization:** OPRF Citizen’s Council

**Date of the meeting:** February 11, 2016

**Names of the District 97 board liaisons:** Graham Brisben

**Names of the District 97 administrative representatives (if applicable):** N/A

**Brief summary/key outcomes of the meeting:** The meeting opened with approval of the prior meeting’s minutes, followed by the Superintendent’s Report. Superintendent Isoye reported that the school would be holding a Black Professionals Day and an African American Parent’s Day. The Superintendent also reported that on the topic of the pool, a re-group was taking place to better engage community support in anticipation of a ballot initiative in November 2016. The goal now was to try to hear more ideas and input from the public.

The school board report was next and delivered by Sarah Spivey. She reported that the board’s policy committee was addressing the topic of student fees (i.e. materials, registration, 1:1 technology, etc.) from the perspective of “fairness in public education.” She said that the topic had originated in the finance committee but drifted into the policy committee.

The main portion of the meeting was on the subject of equity. Supt. Isoye stated that the data on student performance remains challenging in this area and that he wanted to address the topic in a slightly different way. He presented on the topic with Asst. Supt. Prale and Principal Rouse. A math teacher who had attended OPRF as a student before returning as a teacher joined them. She provided a background on the history and development of a racial equity awareness group and how it was evolved into helping to shape professional development (PD). The focus of that PD is asking each teacher to periodically stop and reflect on his or her personal racial identity and consciousness.

Principal Rouse shared that he was hired in 2008 and started to address the issue personally with small book talks. Principal Rouse said that when “we talk about equity in this building, we explicitly talk about race.” He said this was true even above and before socioeconomic differences and that such other issues can become “distractions.” He said that he prefers the discussions to be candid and explicit about race.

It was reported that there are five strands of PD on Wednesday mornings at the school, and racial equity was a “core strand.” This model of PD has been in place at OPRF for five years. As a result, the staff can now ask the question on a variety of different issues, “what does race have to do with this?”

In the context of racial consciousness, an example was given of “microaggressions” – assumptions and subtleties that can be present in interactions where one or more of the parties may not recognize them right away. It was reported that the self-reflective training/PD given to staff, including how to have “courageous [uncomfortable] conversations” compliments the data on achievement, discipline, attendance, and other metrics.

The math teacher said that she tries to “lean-in to the discomfort of talking about” racial differences. “We are talking about this more than ever.” Asst. Supt. Prale said that “challenging the issue” is actually about “challenging myself as a white male educator.” It was also said that staff and administrators want to “investigate [our] personal racial consciousness. We must have those conversations about being part of a system based on white racial consciousness.”

Dr. Isoye recommended reading the book, “Courageous Conversations.”

**Next steps:** None.

**Questions/feedback for the District 97 board:**  It would be interesting to discuss as a board whether we would or should view the question of equity, which is a top priority for us, as explicitly about race in the way that D200 does or more as a socioeconomic issue, which I have heard some on our board say.

**Date of the next meeting:** Thursday, March 10, 2016

**Supplemental documentation (e.g., agenda, reports, etc.) from the meeting (attached):**  None.

**Report submitted by (include name and date):** Graham Brisben, 040316