Elkton School District #34
Curriculum Review Committee
March 10, 2022

Staff present: Andy Boe, Melissa Whitley
Members present: Frank Perrone, Chris Gritton
Community present: Deb Gritton

Meeting began at 6:05 p.m.

1. Acceptance of Minutes from meeting held 12/01/22.

2. Review of Resources Page

3. Direction of State Curriculum Adoption Process

Mr. Boe states that he believes the work the committee is doing is the right work. He believes the math concerns shared previously by Mr. Wolfe is correct. There are influences at ODE that are aligned with CRT in theory but needs to be vetted by all. That piece is huge and is working on addressing through a different path by getting involved at the legislative level with the Oregon Small Schools Association. The problem is when he brings up equity as being one thing, the committee sees equity as another, there is a conflict in having a conversation. We are defining equity differently. My definition, and the School Boards, is equity is equal access to programs and all things at this school whether you are disabled, gifted, a person of color or not, there shouldn't be barriers. Where things get hung up is the CRT, you can't do that, you don't fundamentally understand how people feel and I don't think that's true. As we speak about kindness and treating people well that's not giving us credit for being good people.

Frank Perrone: We can't educate people based on their skin color. That has nothing to do with equal access.

Andy Boe: Where that gets wonky is conversations of what one person's view of history versus another. They say a person of color experienced things vastly different than another person and they want it taught a certain way. History should be taught by facts and not conjecture. What I'm saying is where I'm lodged now and I hope this group will accept. I will make the statement we are not teaching CRT in our schools intentionally or in other way. If someone was to take something out of context. I heard there was an issue someone said prisons were only made for black people. When I walked that backwards it was not congruent as to what was shared at home. If that was said to make white people feel bad about black people in prison I would have handled that.

Frank Perrone: You don't think people unintentionally skew things with their beliefs?

Andy Boe: I do that. Everyone does that. It's a very personal business. There is no way to relate to a kid without my own beliefs.

Frank Perrone: I mean when someone intentionally bends, a very impressionable bend, in one particular direction, then that's not a free lesson.

Andy Boe: I don't think that's happening. If we get focused on fighting each other then I will not be able to get things addressed at the state level. It's not happening here. If we get side tracked and start fighting each other than that's going to be a problem. That's how I'm choosing to approach it. The other thing I wanted to make clear is if you're worried about CRT then we need to not inflate it with gender and identity, etc. those need to be a conversation that they are as important as they need be, to be looked at and talked about as a group of local people in particular in K-5 classrooms.

Frank Perrone: I'm reading horror stories of gender influence and I see that as an attack on a certain psychological develop level to encourage one identity over another on purpose (inaudible)

Andy Boe: Separate issue than CRT, these things do come up in the K-5 world. Acceptance of people. That's how it comes up in K-5 being accepting of all people. That's a place we need to look and talk about and when we start adopting curriculum we can still talk about accepting all sorts of people, which isn't a bad thing, but not push.

Frank Perrone: The high school level all those pressures start to build up and I personally know People, the high school psychological development stage that they were encouraged one way or the other and based on someone else's encouragement and direction they made a life choice that was not true and regretted later and what you ended up with is a person who had a label that by year 3 wanted to shake it and as a junior in high school if you've labeled yourself you have trouble shaking that and it becomes more detrimental to a student. Are we gearing them up for a certain thing by high school and I know I'm reaching here but I'm only reaching here in Elkton.

Andy Boe: I think we're going down a rabbit hole I didn't want to go down .There's a lot more places in the world kids access that that is not at school like the internet and watching repetitious behavior. There are bad people on the internet and the school is the less worrisome place for kids to have this exposure. I think it is disingenuous to attack schools.

Frank Perrone: I don't disagree with you but a real thinking individual isn't attacking schools but making sure the schools is not one more place.

Rob Vest: The cultural stuff at home is more influential and more longstanding just because that's the.. we talk about stability and the kids need for stability, that's a stable thing in their life. They come home, mom and dad are there or moms there or dads there or some combination and we're not gonna swing that pendulum. That's why a few months ago I asked what are the opportunities for us. We give two hoots for how these kids are being shepherd, coached, where we can step in. I guess what are the influences at play for the kids and is it beneficial all together. I think a lot of this stuff the kids are pushing; gender fluidity, are lights, they're out right lights. What are the guards that we can put up against the lies that are trying to creep its way in.

Andy Boe: The problem with that, is it doesn't make a difference what I believe because I have

to teach everyone's kids. The guardrail is taking what you believe and someone else's viewpoint and finding this common ground the schools can focus on which are things like teaching people to be kind to each other or people who are a certain way you don't agree with to accept them as they are. The coach that helps you get back in center. The robotics team. The Boys and Girls Club. All of those things in the community that keeps kids down the middle. The CRT, my tack is, to our fight is at the state level. It's at the ODE level and through lobbyists and start to rein that in. I'm interested in spending time at the Oregon Small Schools Association and share. I have to say I have people that believe this and where we need to be is here. Where I measured in my mind, that part is way over here but the minute that I make a comment about that I'm against equity then I'm a target. As a community we need to stay focused on the other pieces and make sure we don't get hammered by the curriculum in the schools. I don't think we are doing that in our schools. I know we're not. I don't have a staff member that is intentionally teaching CRT and there are moments that may be taken out of context and when I back channel that.

Frank Perrone: We all have to be careful. I don't care what peoples beliefs are (inaudible)wall it's done. I'm not going to do that. The same time we have to find something, we're talking about equity, all of these books at the beginning of the chapter there is a message about NBC. We're not being equitable by just leading off every chapter, every book, every subject with a lead off by NBC. Are we exposing children to something a little more center-right?

Andy Boe: I think we covered that. When you heard Jeremy address how he approaches, that he gives a good balance to kids. In totality we're doing a pretty good job. We're more sensitive to it and we're watching for it.

Rob Vest: They latch on to things out of context and when you're speaking, when you're delivering a message, a lesson, you say things you don't even remember you said.

Andy Boe: I went to high school in Olympia WA and it was 1991 and we must've walked out of school and marched on the capitol 7 times. Kids are kids and they're going to be counter for a reason.

Frank Perrone: Are we back to teaching true American causes and teaching these kids to be self reliant and if they want to take a position, everyone right now, is more than willing to teach children to take a position on CRT and such. We need to be showing a relatively neutral all inclusive…

Andy Boe: I don't think that's us. Equity for us is access. We need to come up with a different word for finding a center of politic and public belief. That's where we're getting into problems is we're taking that word equity and chopping it up into 17 different things.

Frank Perrone: Everyone should have access. I'm not going to argue with that. But how are we going to direct them center for the moment they walk out of here and Angelique can give a lecture on that right now.

Andy Boe: First thing, there are people who don't think equity applies to everyone. And that's unfortunate. I've dealt with it my entire career with kids who are disabled either physical

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disability or mental. Its horrible thing to see those who think we‘re not going to provide services to kids because it’s too hard. That’s my version of equity. It also applies to the kids who are brilliant and are bored to death in school or the kids who can work on cars but are bored to death with everything else.

Frank Perrone: You just gave your experience and how you work on it. I’m have my experiences and I’m going to work hard to make sure they don’t cloud my judgment in this particular case.

Andy Boe: In order to center this back on the CRT piece and this state conversation. This is something I am going to continue to work on. I represent all of you and I think there’s a way to funnel this into a way of being effective and in the future but it’s going to get lost. When I did my research specifically around mathematics they are steep around what is theory and not fact and that’s a problem for me. I guess that’s the nugget for tonight I want to share with you. That’s the solution I’ve come to and the track I’m going to take. You’ll be the first ones, besides teachers, to get eyes on the curriculum. The Board will get to look at these things next week. And the public. If you see things that are a challenge we need to talk about them and we really need to be hyper vigilant.

Rob Vest: We were mincing words and what I wasn’t comfortable was acceptance and I think we mean respect. Acceptance means you’re saying its okay. Respect is you are your own sovereign person and I respect you.

Andy Boe: Right. And I think it’s wrong to have NBC news to have a lead in in the text books.

Frank Perrone: Hillsdale College offers a curriculum that exposes the other side so why are we not looking at that. If we adopt a curriculum that is a little tingy can we use other supplements?

Andy Boe: And that’s why it’s important to hire the right people. I don’t know that I was … I feel better now about what we’re doing. Quite frankly I was a bit worried when we began and I’m not now. There are times that I don’t agree with messages I hear from my Lutheran minister but that’s no different. I think we do 1000 things for kids to have access points to make decisions on their own and guiding them. We have leadership, we have sports, opportunities for kids in clubs. All of those things are that and those are things geared toward building citizenship and having a voice. Those are the type of things we don’t give ourselves credit for. Our policies that are in place really govern that which is giving kids a voice but you can’t just walk out of class and there are consequences. All those things are built almost constitutionally.

Frank Perrone: I have nothing against consequences.

Andy Boe: As it comes back to this conversation we have to watch for those policies changing and are being shaped by political influences that as a board we have to temper and those are the places that as citizens we need to watch and make sure we’re keeping track. As long as I’ve been in education there hasn’t been a group of people watching. Calling it CRT is a red herring, I think there’s a lot more going on.
Frank Perrone: I think there was a nefarious purpose behind that and it was a way to get people

up in arms and cause to be divisive. They have been successful doing that and slipping everything in.

Rob Vest: The original that I can recall was the Bolshevik revolution.

Frank Perrone: We can pick a number of topics in history that are very similar to what's taking place right now but if we tailor it to something in our lifetime it's the same way.

Rob Vest: The anger, passion and vigor it's the fruit of the theory. Boring is what I'm looking for. Boring, bland, balanced.

Andy Boe: I think what we need to be more concerned about is complacency. Every time we divert to take energy away from that is a bad thing is the public needs to step up at being concerned with substance abuse and poverty but it's what is keeping us from being great.

Rob Vest: Our culture in the Pacific Northwest has bred that and is prevalent.

Andy Boe: I got a call from a person in town regarding a person in crisis in our school or our community but I'm the only person who has contacts. We should be screaming from the trees trying to get help for people. It's hard for me to get excited about moving on because we don't have healthy people. It's bad.

Rob Vest: Next week sometime surely you've got some sort of paperwork and qualifications and checkpoint and stuff can I get some of those?

Andy Boe: We have a volunteer handbook.

Chris Gritton: I noticed that any volunteers or anything volunteers have to be vaccinated.

Andy Boe: That's the mandate. We're not checking status but we ask that if you're not vaccinated they're not volunteers but we ask if you're not that you wear a mask and all unvaccinated must wear a mask. I think they lifted that for the State Patrol.

Chris Gritton: Those are barriers for people like myself from being involved.

Deb Gritton: You're being involved in the legislative level, have they discussed where you feel race belongs in school? I can see people discussing race in social studies, current events. I don't understand why it would be in language arts, math, PE are we able to discuss how we in school will walk the line?

Rob Vest: We talked with Jeremy specifically in social studies, and what we found out it boils down to the instructor and the individual teacher and how that's being communicated and we have to go teacher by teacher. I asked Jeremy point blank and talking to him a half hour he would give equal weight to the Irish in the 1800's and the Chinese and the Japanese in the internment camp he would give the same weight to the slavery in the south. His presentation is his take was very balanced and neutral and non influential. I guess the answer is it depends but

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it's going take us going through with individual teachers.

Frank Perrone: I agree with you but there's a number of classes in any school it's a mute point and it isn't relevant.

Andy Boe: I don't know that but specifically with math, and CRT, and how they're trying to address, what ODE is saying is people of color have a barrier to access that educationally they are taught in a way they don't understand because it's the way those ideas and concepts are framed. Because of their experience they run against barriers to learn math.

Deb Gritton: How do we walk the line and figure out how they are going to be teaching and how do you as a superintendent or school board make sure the line is followed. How is that measured?

Andy Boe: My answer is we need to be focused on understanding our community and what our community really needs and what the barriers are for our kids. When I worked close to the Yakima Indian Reservation the kids could not get how to plan, budget or save money. It wasn't part of their culture. That skillset is not something that was part of their culture. We had to talk to the community to understand the barriers. Poverty is that common thread that is the barrier for kids. How can we get past that? In our community it's not about race as it is about socioeconomics and the lack of exposure. Here again we are being forced into a conversation and it's critical in one spot as it's coming from the state but it's not the conversation.

Deb Gritton: Talking about the gender stuff, talking about the race. I wanna talk about where's our core and making sure the core is what we are looking at.

Andy Boe: My core is around our virtues curriculum, our house project. Who we are is having good people that make sound decisions that is the core of what we do. We focus at the grade school on all of these virtues. That's the core for our teachers. That's the core for our kids. That should be a core for our community. We took it and made it ours. I worked very hard 5 years ago. The second step to that is engagement. We are engaged with an outfit called IRRE and we collect data on grades, attendance, surveys from kids if they feel safe, engaged and we find that poverty piece, the dysfunctional family piece, they feel unsafe and we need to find ways to engage them to feel they feel safe and have a family. All of those things we try to cover at our grade school pays off when they're in high school. Our kids are really kind kids. I'm proud of what we've done. Ford Family has given hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Chris Gritton: We weren't sure how our kids were going to be accepted and they were.

Andy Boe: We keep it down the middle because our teachers feed off of that. The other piece we did was train at Ron Clark. It's a 100% African American inner city school in Ron Clark. It's an amazing place. It is so strict. The expectations are so high. Our teachers saw that it's okay, even if they're poor, to have high expectations and hold them accountable. There are barriers to that in our community as soon as I hold a kid accountable I get push back from the parent. When we do those things right and my involvement at the state level, and the more I read about CRT I feel it's a detriment to what we're trying to do. Have you experienced that with what we do?

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Frank Perrone: There's a few things that raise my hackles. As we delve into it further I could have taken things out of context. I think my favorite after asking both (inaudible) Angelique had some interaction, not a lot. Abigail has had quite a bit. It's a litmus test for me I asked How (inaudible) why would I want to alienate my audience it was a good rule of thumb. I think we can raise our expectations and that would not be detrimental it would be beneficial especially looking at the kids in the community including mine. I think we need to raise the expectations and hold them accountable. I think it's harder and there are some bumps and bruises along the way but saying these are our expectations is far better than saying we are going to lower our expectations. I agree with you, we need to take that group and raise their expectations and all we are doing is helping young people to become adults.

Andy Boe: But we have to recognize there are different experiences. Culturally we are poor and we are white. That's a fact. Thank you for centering back on that I don't think we give ourselves enough credit. It's important to fend it off and look for the red herring but if we can stay centered on the line which is raising good, kind, smart kids that have a chance when they get out of here. We don't guarantee outcomes but we guarantee access. That's where we're headed. Does this curriculum do that? Looking at the context they're doing that in. They all have to be good readers.

Rob Vest: We don't believe with the content. They provide the context.

Frank Perrone: If we were going to expose something out of center then we should show them the other side.

Andy Boe: If we're not careful our teachers will be afraid to do that. If I was a teacher I wouldn't do that, I wouldn't say anything that is off. We're fighting against each other here. We need to be careful we don't get to that point. Let's not condemn the entire system. This resource list I sent out has all of that information.

Deb Gritton: You're saying our weakest point is that we don't have a community of parents who are engaged in their children's education.

Andy Boe: And part of that is the carter is it is hard to engage parents who are from out of district, and we've talked about ways to get people back like busses for conferences etc., but that is a barrier to our success. They are kids who are just poor. As we crawl out of this COVID hole we need to find a way to build our community. It's really about this community being a good welcoming healthy place to be we will have enrollment. That's my belief. I think other places struggle with that, they're not healthy. It's about relationships and we have to be good teachers. I don't know what more I can do besides try to build community. Another place is ECEC and the City of Elkton. Looking for a place to build community. It seems to be working here in our community but we have to be really, really careful.

Frank Perrone: Dividing into little groups builds animosity and there's no place more prevalent than in the schools

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Andy Boe: That's why we teach these things in the schools.

Rob Vest: I declare if you can't understand me or my feelings or my positions the whole topic becomes a club – a weapon against that person and is continually used to suppress or alienate.

Andy Boe: We're pretty good about listening and then trying to make a change. I have a set of rules we have to follow and schools have a set of rules they have to follow and that's another thing kids need to see, is that I too have to follow the rules.

That is what I am asking you all to go out and share is that I am getting involved at the state level and this district will be represented at the state level. I don't know that organization is the right organization. It has been taken over by COSA but unless we get representation at that level, I can't guarantee we will make huge changes but that's the message from tonight.

4. Review of Benchmark Reading Curriculum Recommended for Adoption

Here's the nugget about reviewing curriculum is you have to have a focus. You need to be looking for does it have messages that aren't congruent with what we've talked about. It might be responsible of us to teach kindergartners about gender issues, If you're lens is to go in there looking for something you're going to find it. You can check them out. Bring them home In the spring we're going to have to adopt it. If there are major issues we'll have to put the brakes on it.

Chris Gritton: Do you have multiples?

Andy Boe: What I have is what I have. These are samples of the new curriculum to be adopted for next year in English Language Arts.

Adjourned meeting at 7:26 p.m. to review curriculum if you so choose.

Next meeting will be held Monday, April 18, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

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