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## District Reorganization Meeting Summary

1 message

**Jason Olsen** <Jason.Olsen@slcschools.org>

Tue, Nov 3, 2015 at 12:24 PM

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### MEMO

To: Board of Education, Administrators, School Community Councils

Re: District Reorganization

Tuesday, November 3, 2015

The purpose of this memo is to summarize a meeting Superintendent McKell Withers had with a group of educators last Friday to explain his vision and strategy for restructuring and expanding the equity efforts of the district in light of his coming retirement and the recent retirement of Associate Superintendent Patrick Garcia. The meeting included members of the Superintendency, employees from the Equity Department, members of the Equity Leadership team, representatives from the Salt Lake Association of School Administrators (SLASA), representatives from the Salt Lake Educators Association (SLEA), and members of School Leadership Support .

Dr. Withers said his reorganization plan was shared in its entirety with the Board of Education during its most recent meeting, and part of the plan was shared with administrators during the recent General Administrators Meeting (GAM). However, there were points not shared publicly in GAM because he still needed to speak with the employees directly involved in the proposed changes. In the Friday meeting, he shared with the group the remainder of his plan.

- Kathleen Christy would devote her full time to assist schools in developing their equity plans, which would become part of their respective School Improvement Plans.
- Ms. Christy would report directly to the Superintendent and be a regular participant in Superintendent meetings. Ms. Christy previously reported to the Associate Superintendent, who then reported to the Superintendent.
- Hire someone, hopefully by January 1, 2016, to supervise the Equity Department.
- Responsibilities of compliance and investigations would be under the district's Executive Director of Policy and Legal Services, Kristina Kindl.
- The current Equity Department, including the to-be-hired supervisor, would report to the Chief School Improvement Officer. However, Ms. Christy would still be closely tied to this department and could assist as needed.

Dr. Withers says his plan will be an expansion of the equity support and expertise offered to our schools. He is also concerned about setting up an organization that will offer the incoming superintendent flexibility. To that end, his reorganization does not include replacing Dr. Garcia, rather shifting his responsibilities to three other administrators.

Participants in the meeting were then allowed to express their opinions or concerns about the reorganization plan. Those opinions and concerns centered on how we as a district can better emphasize the importance of excellence in equity, and all equity issues, in our schools and our communities, and how the district can work to have the ethnic makeup of the district administration more closely reflect the diversity of our students.

- Participants in the meetings expressed concerns about the sustainability of Ms. Christy's new role. They were concerned that using one-time funds for her new position could lead to discontinuing the position after only one year, which could send a message to schools that equity issues were not a high priority for the district.
- They said strengthening Ms. Christy's job title would help school administrators realize the seriousness of her work and equity work in general.
- They also voiced their concerns about the increased need for recruiting and retaining administrators of color in the highest levels of district leadership.
- They would like to see additional support given to the district's current administrators of color in obtaining upper level administrative roles in the district.

There was disagreement over whether Dr. Withers' proposed plan would be more beneficial to furthering the district's equity goals than another structure, and if there was appropriate input from stakeholders on this particular plan. The Superintendent said the reorganization plan is still a work in progress, and he would be open to recommendations. At the same time, he reminded those in attendance that he could not make any guarantees about what will happen when a new superintendent is hired. A new superintendent could change everything.

Dr. Withers said his goal for this meeting was to allow him to fully explain his reorganization plan and to hopefully clarify some of the misinformation that has been discussed in the community. He then asked a small group of meeting participants to write this memo so that accurate information about his plan, and what took place in the meeting, could be shared with a wider audience.

Signed,

Sandra Buendia

Kristina Kindl

Kathleen Christy

Jennifer Mayer-Glenn

Jason Olsen

James Yapias

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