

Public comment for the Equity Review Committee. Sally Perkins, June 14, 2022

I very much appreciated the conversation by the Equity Review Committee on June 9. You all made points that I would like to support. I also have a couple of requests for your consideration.

1. I believe that ERC members are justified in your concern about getting the materials outlined in the Resolution piecemeal. It is very hard to see how the pieces fit together if you don't see them all at once. I hope that the Executive's Office takes your concern seriously and assures that you see the entire package in time to review it thoroughly and make thoughtful comments.
2. I believe that ERC members are right about the need for a permanent, institutional County equity office. The County Council needs to provide a sufficient budget for the work, to support enough staff, office space, and the resources (written, video, audio and other forms) to support professional development for all County staff. The charge from the County Council for this office should include full access to all County staff.

It is my experience that the success of a serious equity initiative relies on an office of people with strong credentials, who can coach, mentor, encourage and teach staff people about applying equity concepts and principles in their work.

3. For the data sets that underlie the Equity Index:
 - a. All racial-ethnic data needs to be disaggregated, at least down to the County Council District level. Lumping all people of color together in one group masks varying levels of disproportionality among these groups. The County should seek the advice of experts in data disaggregation to determine the right level of detail.
 - b. There may be additional disaggregations that would be important, including gender/gender identification, age, disability, economic status, etc.
 - c. Each data set should be examined for over- or under-sampling of specific groups. Each data set should be examined for underlying assumptions and/or algorithms that may reflect unintended bias, before the County decides to use the data set in the Equity Index.
4. In the conversation at the meeting, there was a statement made about the value of early childhood education in terms of a child's future academic success. This might have come up in relation to kindergarten readiness. If the County is going to make assumptions about the value of early childhood education, then please be sure that you

are envisioning culturally relevant and culturally supportive early childhood education. Parents should have the option to enroll their children in high-quality early childhood education programs that meet the cultural and identity needs of their children, and one goal of the County should be to ensure that such high-quality programs are readily available and financially accessible.

Again, thank you for your work and the time and effort you are investing in the Equity Review Committee's work.

Sally Perkins

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District 4, Hilltop