

First Universalist Church Board of Trustees

August 20, 2015

Board Packet

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Race Forward Document

Attached

Date: 13 August 2015

To: First Universalist Board of Trustees

From: Cindy Marsh

Re: August 20 Board of Trustees Meeting

I found it most rewarding to welcome Christina and Marion (and Nate, too) to our Board at the orientation session on the 6th as well as to gather with our continuing Trustees. The shared commitment to the work of our church, particularly around racial justice, was inspiring. We are off to a good start!

Our August meeting should be full and meaningful. Note we begin with a reading from Justin, followed by a response to one of several “reflection questions” from each of us (answer the question that speaks to you). See the SM report for the reading and questions.

The consent agenda includes our approval for congregational sponsorship of two congregants as candidates for fellowship in the UU ministry: Arif Mamdani and Sara Smalley. It also includes approval of authorizing seminary student Andrea Johnson to perform marriage ceremonies; our current policy is that seminarians on their way to becoming ministers can be authorized to officiate at weddings. Short bio’s are included for each. It is a joy to support these talented and dedicated congregants in their ministerial studies and work! The Board also approves the appointment of the Chair of the Nominating Committee; Pam Vincent has agreed to serve in this role.

Our August meeting agenda includes several important topics and I’ll highlight just a few. First, we will have a “mini working session” on what the Senior Minister Team and Trustees need from each other to deepen trust and create an effective partnership. This is a follow-up to our Trustee working session last April. We had much success as a SM Team and Board last year, so this discussion occurs within a positive context. As prework, please read the session outline as well as the notes from the April 2014 working session. These will come from me under

separate cover. We'll do some of this work in small groups so plan on an engaging session. We'll also conduct this part of our meeting in Executive Session (with Justin and Jen, but without congregants in attendance).

The Governance Committee (GC) is tasked with helping us to further explore what it means to apply a racial justice perspective in making decisions and analyzing issues, to apply that lens to our strategic plan and visionary goals, and to foster our own growth and development in our understanding of racism and white privilege. The GC will give an initial report and recommendations on their work.

Finally, we'll receive a high level view of the Q4 and year-end financial results; the Finance Committee will then review this data in more detail. Additional updates in the SM report will be highlighted and reflect the important work going on at First Universalist.

Thank you all for your passion and dedication to First Universalist. We continue on an exciting journey together!

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Board of Trustees Meeting
20 August, 2015
6:30 p.m. Cummins Room
Agenda

6:30 Call to Order

- Lighting of the Chalice
May this flame that burns before us light our way, informed by the wisdom of leaders gone before, and inspired by the trust that we have been given as stewards of this Church. May we have vision, compassion, and courage as we serve this congregation now and for the generations to come.
- Reading (see SM report)
- Spiritual reflection question (see SM report)

6:50 Consent Agenda

- Approval of minutes from June meeting and June EC meeting
- Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers
- Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes
- Sponsorship of Arif Mamdani and Sara Smalley for seminary and Andrea Johnson to be credentialed to conduct marriage ceremonies
- Appointment of Pam Vincent as Chair, Nominating Committee

7:00 Executive Session: Building the Senior Minister Team and BOT Partnership
(follow-up to April BOT working session)

- See prep materials and outline sent under separate cover

8:00 BREAK

8:05 Governance Committee Report

- Includes initial work and recommendations on using a racial justice lens

8:30 Finance Committee Report

- Includes items from Monitoring Schedule: Financial condition and Q4 financials

8:45 Items from the Senior Minister and Board Chair

9:00 Items from the President

- Goals for FY 16 – finalize goals in September
- Retreat and Working sessions
 - Topics
 - Scheduling

9:15 Adjournment

Opening Reading:

Generally speaking the more we practice something the better we get at it. Our experience of course teaches us that sometimes we practice and we don't seem to get better, but in fact we are getting better – we just may not be getting better at what we want. Each time we practice piano with a grumpy attitude, then we may get better at piano, but we will also certainly get better at being grumpy. Or when we practice meditation and consciously allow ourselves to daydream, then as time passes we get better and better at daydreaming while sitting ever so still. Practice is always happening. It is continuously shaping us: opening us up to new ways of being, or increasingly calcifying the way we think, act, and feel.”
(From The Transformative Power of Practice by Ng’ethe Maina and Staci Haines.)

Spiritual Reflection Questions (you don’t need to answer all of them; they’re meant to get you thinking):

*What habits or practices in your own life would you like to change, or interrupt?

*What are some of your personal practices at Board meetings - calcifying or life giving?

*What are we practicing as a faith community? What practices are opening us to new ways of being, or calcifying the way we think?

Staff Changes:

- Andrea Love joined us two months ago as our Membership Specialist, working closely with Brad on helping people with their pledges, pledge payments, quarterly statements and more.

Volunteer Changes:

- Jeanne Peppel has joined the Pledge team. She joins Marcia Wattson and Zach Steven.
- Joan Naymark has agreed to co-chair the Faithful Action Council with me, and we have a great slate of council members. More information below.
- Jeffrey Snyder and Deb Soulen/White are new members of the Community Investment Team (the team that reviews nominations for the offering plate). They join chair, Ed Cerier.
- Joan Patterson will replace Cindy Marsh as the Team Leader for the Augsburg Fairview Academy (AFA) ministry. Cindy will help Joan get things in place for the new school year and support a smooth transition.

Updates from the Sr. Minister:

Renaming Lake Calhoun Update:

- There is energy and momentum around this issue. It's personal for us, a religious ghost in our closet, because John C. Calhoun was a Unitarian. And these efforts fit with our Racial Justice work, as well. I've been in touch with City Council Members, Hennepin County Board members, members of the Native American Community, Park Board Members, and many others, all of whom are in support of changing the name. Rather than immediately submitting a petition to the Hennepin County Board to request a hearing to change the name of the lake, the Racial Justice Leadership Team and I are engaging with members of the Native American Community to educate ourselves, our congregation and others, about the history of Mde Maka Ska (the Dakota name of the lake), as well as the indigenous people of the area, and how, equipped with new information and understanding, we can slowly and intentionally move toward changing the name of the lake. This conversation has already put the church into a variety of new relationships with people and organizations outside our walls.

The launch of the Faithful Action Leadership Council:

- We're continuing to create a new model for Faithful Action work in the church, and in early August, we sent the following note to the new council members:

Welcome to the First Universalist Faithful Action Leadership Council!

Thank you for your willingness to serve on the Council. The FALC will be the body that stewards the Faithful Action work of our church in the coming years. (As a reminder, the Council is described here: <http://tinyurl.com/osr2vf2>). The goal is to create opportunities for our entire congregation to engage in faithful action work, and to create structures that are accessible, transparent and accountable. All FALC work will be steeped in our racial justice perspective and use a racial justice lens. We will work with partners (i.e., Habitat for Humanity, Simpson Housing Services, MN Interfaith Power and Light, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, Augsburg Fairview Academy, etc.) in order to leverage our resources and expand our insights into ways to effect systemic change and provide direct service. Our goal is deeper synergy and results by working together more effectively.

You will receive a Doodle Poll shortly to help us select the best date for our first meeting at the end of August (25 or 26) and second meeting at the end of September (29 or 30). Please respond quickly to the Poll. An agenda and materials will be shared a week before the August meeting. A typical term for FALC is two years, but since we are just starting out, we would like

to start with staggered terms - some one-year and some two-year terms. Please consider which of these options will work best for you.

We are excited to begin this new approach to faithful action work. Thank you for joining us in this important ministry!

In faith,

Justin and Joan
FALC Co-Chairs

**Faithful Action Leadership Council
2015-2016**

Co-chairs:	Justin Schroeder and Joan Naymark
Secretary:	Taylor Putz

Board	Cindy Marsh
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Foundation	Kristin Siegesmund
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Racial Justice	<i>TBD</i>
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Daytime Connections/ Augsburg Fairview Academy	Joan Patterson
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Environmental Justice	Stan Sattinger
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Community Investment Team	Deb Soulen /White
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Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance	Taylor Putz
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Youth Cultural Exchange	Sarah Sheehan
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At Large	Marjorie Herdes Matt Kresl
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Members should represent partner groups and include “a variety of ages, genders, family structures, and colors”

On Sunday, October 25, we'll hold a Faithful Action Fair, highlighting the new Council, all of our partners, introducing our Holiday Giving Recipient, and giving congregants a chance to see how the new structures works.

Update on our IT work:

- New computers have been delivered and we've working with our IT Consultant, Kiwana Cannon, to migrate all staff to the Google Apps platform, using Google Calendar, Drive, and Gmail, so we can increase ease and efficiency of work between staff members.

Update on work with Liz Loeb, Development Consultant:

There are two main focus areas right now:

- Liz and I are starting to work with various church groups (Pledge Team, Planned Giving Team, Community Investment Team, Foundation, Finance Committee, and Holiday Giving Team), in order to unsilo the different development and fundraising efforts and create a shared vision for supporting and sustaining this faith community we love, a community that transforms us and the world. This co-created messaging and narrative will then be used in the pledge drive, online, and again, as we move toward a capital campaign in the fall of 2016. Additional, part of this work is to set up systems and structures that ensure communication and information sharing between the various fundraising/development groups of the church..
- We're also working on donor/congregant cultivation plan, with a goal of increasing the overall pledge base by \$100,000, so that we are strong and stable footing as we move into our capital campaign. Part of this plan includes training a dozen lay leaders to help make phone calls to church members, to ask them to make the most ambitious and generous pledge they can, to support this institution that they love and that is having an impact in the world. In addition, I'll be making a number of personal asks, as well.

Updates from the Senior Minister and Chair of the Board:

- **Resource Development Planning Committee** - Committee consists of Justin Schroeder, Cindy Marsh, Dave Bach, Dick Niemiec, and congregants Dan Berg

and Polly Talen. The objectives of this committee include 1) evaluating and selecting a capital campaign consultant, 2) planning broad strategy and tactics, particularly what should happen this year in preparation, and 3) developing an initial communication plan. The kick-off meeting is scheduled for August 11 and we will have more to report at the August BOT meeting.

- **Conversations with Shir Tikvah** - A getting acquainted meeting was held with representatives of Shir Tikvah to explore ways we might partner together around sharing space, social justice work, and/or other initiatives. Shir Tikvah is the congregation that bought our former building, and uses our current building during the high holidays and other special occasions.

June 18 2015 First Universalist Church Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday, June 18, 2015

3:13 PM

Attendees:

- Dave Bach, Pamela Vincent, Karin Wille, Dick Niemiec, Lark Weller, Jill Braithwaite, Eric Cooperstein, Richard Spratt, Cindy Marsh, Rev. Justin Schroeder, Rev. Jen Crow
- Guests present:

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by Dave Bach, President

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

Reading from John O'Donohue "For Work" read by Cindy Marsh

Check Ins

Consent Agenda

- Approval of minutes from May 21 Board Meeting- correct to Lark not attending
- Approval of the minutes from the May 31 Annual Meeting- correct to Karin Wille being elected.
- Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers
- Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes- new communications manager hired today, will start next week. Jennifer Stromberg.
- **Motion** made and seconded to approve the consent agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of amended minutes from the November 21, 2014 Board Meeting

Approval of October 16 meeting minutes and ministerial housing allowances.

Motion made and seconded to approve the amended minutes as above. **Motion carried.**

Approval of revised housing allowance for Rev. Elaine Aron Tenbrink

Letter is on file indicating that the requested change in housing allowance-- designating an additional \$ 28,000 for the remainder of this year, bringing the total to \$40,000.

Motion was made and seconded to approve the change in Rev. Tenbrink's housing allowance. **Motion carried** with one abstention.

Report from the Senior Minister-see board packet for details.

- Capital Campaign discussion
 - Decision made to wait until next year to run the capital campaign. This will give lead time to involve the congregation in the process, and to evaluate other capital campaign consultants. A team will need to be created to do the initial vetting of RFPs and make recommendations to the board. This team should probably be limited to 2 or 3 board members and invite other members of the congregation to be involved in this process/committee. Early process needs to be mindful of engaging congregation in decision making, not presenting the capital campaign as a 'done deal'.
- Loyola Project
 - See board packet, for information only. This provides an opportunity to benefit both organizations. A one year experiment to work on this, then evaluate at the end of the year-- how many people had spiritual direction here, what is impact on the building, etc.
- Faithful Action Ministry Update

- Information to the board. Jen has been meeting with the Faithful Action leadership team, to determine structure of Faithful Action ministries going forward. See the church website for details.
- Racial Justice discussion
 - Changed discussion from video mentioned in the senior minister's report to an article Justin is sharing about last night's events in Charleston, SC.
 - Continue to ask ourselves how we view all decisions through a racial justice lens.
- Holiday Giving Initiative
 - Need to have a recipient selected before the Faithful Action Council meets. Thought is to consider Beacon Interfaith Housing as our recipient. This was discussed with the FA leadership team. This could be a good partnership with Families Moving Forward, perhaps offering supportive services for a year when families transition out of Families Moving Forward.
- Justin update on pledge
 - He's been making calls and additional pledge income is coming in.

Items from the Monitoring Schedule

- Membership and attendance trends- postponed to a future meeting, to allow Elaine to attend and present.

Committee Reports

Finance committee

- Evaluation of the year- contained in the minutes of the Finance Committee. Dick feels much of this year's accomplishments are due to the work done last year by Paul Robinson.
- Update for year end projections-- looks like we are coming in much closer to break-even. Jen still feels confident. The real question remains on the income side, not expenses. Still \$200,000 shy of actual receipt of pledge income. This seems in line with previous years, when significant pledge income comes in at the end of the year.

Governance committee- Lark Weller

- Evaluation of goals- see minutes of the Governance Committee for details.
- Plans for next year- identifying some of the 'big picture' items for next year.
- Board self-evaluation- summary of the results were sent out by Jill. Overall, we see progress in most areas, with room to grow. Governance committee will do more analysis of this in the fall.
- Congregational survey- summary sent by Dave Leppik. Lots of discussion regarding racial justice, on both ends. Less than 20% of the congregation completed the survey. Lark will send a link to the actual survey to everyone on the board.
- Next steps with Covenant of Right Relations
 - Committee is recommending that board do full listening sessions with the congregation in the fall.

Items from the President

- Annual Meeting debriefing
 - Evaluation of Board Goals for FY 15
 - Deferred to a deeper conversation, coupled with the board survey
- Plans for conversations for board tenure

- Small group met with Justin and Jen- will have future conversations in August.
- New board member orientation- Dave and Cindy will discuss further. Cindy mentions that because board is not meeting in July, plan might be a more tailored orientation for just the new members, but be open to others who wish to attend. Also consider a social event with the new members.
- August board meeting
- June 29 board party- 6:30 pm at Karin's house. Karin will purchase food at Whole Foods.

Executive Session- moved to executive session at 9:07 pm

Returned to regular session at 9:27.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn. Motion carried--

Adjournment at 9:29 pm

Minutes submitted by: Pamela Vincent

June Attendance

	2015		2014	
Adults		10:00		10:00
1st week		385		403
2nd week		258		289
3rd week		232		249
4th week		227		254
5th week		208		192
Monthly Total		1310		1387
Average for June		262		277.4
RE				
1st week				
2nd week				
3rd week				
4th week				
5th week				
Monthly Total				
Average for June				
Combined Average		262		277.4

July Attendance

	2015		2014	
Adults		10:00		10:00
1st week		169		250
2nd week		330		259
3rd week		252		253
4th week		282		238
5th week				
Monthly Total		1033		1000
Average for July		258.25		250
RE				
1st week				
2nd week				

3rd week
4th week
5th week

Monthly Total
Average for July

258.25		

288.25		

Combined Average

**First Universalist Church
JUNE 2015 Statistical Report
July 16, 2015**

MEMORIAL SERVICES: 0

MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT: 0

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL: 0

MEMBERS REINSTATED: 1

Peg Mitchell

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL: 30

Jennifer Livingston – Moved to Illinois

Anthony and Kathleen Green changed status to “friend”

Andrew Mason and Julie Risser changed status to “friend”

Jimmy Mach, changed status to “friend”

Vaugh Asselstine, changed status to “friend”

Jo Montie and Carl Besser, changed status to “friend”

Gail O’Kane changed status to “friend”

John Edward Middlebrook – deceased 5/25/15

Sarah Ward – moved away

David Krewinghaus and Erin Kelly – moved to Brookline, MA

Megan Atwood – moved away, address unknown

Jim Wallace and Ann Dargent-Wallace

Matt Urbanowitz and Erin Sheehan – too long a commute

Sarah Deziel – moved to Stillwater

Sharon and Jen Alton – kids grown, not very involved now

Ellie Favell – asked to be removed

John and JoAnn Haluska – asked to be removed

Lori Bruzek and Jen O’Brien – moved away, address unknown

Carol Hed – moved away, address unknown

Eric Penniston and Sarah Anderson – moved away, address unknown

CHILDREN DEDICATED: 0

	To Date	End of Year Totals			
MEMBERS	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-11
(Fiscal Year)	58	46	110	76	98
TOTAL MEMBERS:	924	921	1030	953	927

TOTAL MEMBERS AS OF THE LAST MEETING: 953

To be added: 1

To be removed : 30

TOTAL MEMBERS: 924

**First Universalist Church
JULY 2015 Statistical Report
August 20, 2015**

MEMORIAL SERVICES: 1

Jean Petersen – The Rev. Elaine Aron Tenbrink

MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT: 0

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL: 0

MEMBERS REINSTATED: 0

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL: 2

Gwendolyn Mosborg – moved to California
Thomas Atchison - deceased

CHILDREN DEDICATED: 0

	To Date	End of Year Totals			
MEMBERS	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-11
(Fiscal Year)	58	46	110	76	98
TOTAL MEMBERS:	922	921	1030	953	927

TOTAL MEMBERS AS OF THE LAST MEETING: 924

To be added: 0

To be removed : 2

TOTAL MEMBERS: 922

Statement of Congregational Sponsorship

One of the requirements for Fellowship as a Unitarian Universalist minister is sponsorship by a Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregation. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure familiarity on the part of our UU ministers with UU congregational life, and encourage congregations to take a responsible role in the recruitment, preparation and assessment of our future ministers.

Sponsorship of a Candidate indicates confidence in the person's potential and suitability for UU ministry. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee and the UUA Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group will regard congregational sponsorship as evidence that the person seeking fellowship is actively committed to Unitarian Universalism and the institutions which uphold our faith tradition.

In most instances, sponsorship of a Candidate will be determined by the congregation or its representative body, and not by congregational vote.

With the above in mind, we, the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

are pleased to sponsor the Arif Mamdani as a Candidate for fellowship in UU ministry.

Signed,

Cynthia E. Marsh

President, First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Please Print:

Name of Candidate: Arif Mamdani

Name of Congregation: First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Address of Congregation: 3400 Dupont Ave South, Minneapolis MN 55408

Statement of Congregational Sponsorship

Please return to the Ministerial Credentialing Office: mcoadministrator@uua.org
Unitarian Universalist Association
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston MA 02210-1409

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In most instances, sponsorship of a Candidate will be determined by the congregation or its representative body, and not by congregational vote.

With the above in mind, we, the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
are pleased to sponsor Sara Smalley as a Candidate for fellowship in the UU ministry.

Signed,

Cynthia E. Marsh

President, First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Please Print:

Name of Candidate: Sara Smalley

Name of Congregation: First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Address of Congregation: 3400 Dupont Ave South, Minneapolis MN 55408

Statement of Congregational Sponsorship

Please return to the Ministerial Credentialing Office: mcoadministrator@uua.org
Unitarian Universalist Association
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston MA 02210-1409



First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

August 20, 2015

Director of Licensing – Vital Records
Hennepin County Government Center
300 S 6th St. A-025
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0026

To the Director of Licensing – Vital Records:

This letter is to certify that First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota, authorizes Andrea Danielle Johnson of 2425 Humboldt Avenue South in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to perform and solemnize marriage ceremonies in the State of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Marsh
President, Board of Trustees

Richard Spratt
Vice President, Board of Trustees

Dick Niemiec
Treasurer, Board of Trustees

Bio's for Ministerial Candidates Seeking Sponsorship

Arif Mamdani will begin his second year at United Theological Seminary. He is a worship associate at First Universalist Church, has served as an RE teacher, and is active with our Wellspring program. He served as a guest preacher at First Universalist this summer. Arif attends First Universalist with his spouse, Channing McKinley, and their two daughters, Rasana and Satya.

Sara Smalley has been a member of First Universalist for almost 20 years. She helped to co-found the young adult group in the late 1990s, the parents with young children group in the early 2000s, and AUW Friendship Groups a few years later. Her most visible lay leadership roles at First Universalist were as the communications chair for the senior minister search committee and the chair of the hiring advisory team that assisted the Rev. Justin Schroeder in finding and hiring the Rev. Jen Crow. She also served our congregation as the Interim Director of Membership during the 2012-2013 church year.

This fall, Sara will start her Master of Divinity degree at Meadville Lombard Theological School as the incoming Lavan Scholar, a distinction that recognizes her contribution to our denomination and her clear vision for her future ministry. She also serves part time as the national UU Soul Matters Sharing Circle Coordinator.

Sara attends First Universalist with her spouse, Doug, and her children Ike (12) and Bennett (9).

Andrea Johnson is pursuing her Master of Divinity degree at United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, MN and has completed more than half of her coursework. She will graduate in 2018. She will be a Chaplain intern this fall at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. She has been a member of First Universalist Church since 2002 along with her three children, Alex, Ben and Kate. She supports Jen Crow on the Pastoral Care Team, facilitates Wellspring groups and is becoming a Racial Justice trainer.

Arif Mamdani
Bio for First Universalist Church of Minneapolis



Arif grew up in Oak Park, IL, earned his undergraduate degree from Drew University, and spent a few years living and working in New York City before returning to the Midwest. He currently serves as an Associate Director with the Kaleo Center for Faith, Justice & Social Transformation, and is enrolled as a Master of Divinity student at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. Arif also has a small but growing practice as a coach and spiritual director.

Arif's career includes more than 15 years working to support grassroots progressive social justice efforts locally and across the nation. Prior to joining the Kaleo Center, Arif worked at the Progressive Technology Project, the Seasons Fund for Social Transformation, and TakeAction Minnesota. Arif is a graduate of the Year-Long Fellowship program at the Rockwood Leadership Institute, and serves on the boards of several organizations including the Church of the Larger Fellowship, the Movement Strategy Center, and the advisory committee of MN Community Sings.

Arif comes to Unitarian Universalism through his marriage to Channing McKinley, who grew up attending First Universalist. He envisions developing a community ministry through which he aspires to grow the intersection points for faith and social justice, with a particular focus on more depth and breadth to multi-faith justice work.

Arif lives in St. Paul with his wife and two daughters.

Governance Committee
<p>Monday, August 10, 2015 — 6:30-8:00 p.m.</p> <p>North Narthex Room (north side of building between sanctuary and balcony)</p> <p>First Universalist Church</p> <p>Attendees: Richard Spratt, Marion Dane Bauer, David Leppik, Lark Weller, Jill Braithwaite</p>

Reading + check in

from “Inventory/On Being 52” by James Baldwin

My progress report

*Concerning my journey to the palace of wisdom
is discouraging,*

I lack certain indispensable aptitudes.

Furthermore, it appears

That I packed the wrong things

Racial justice (RJ) lens and decision point

The Board will be focusing carefully on applying a RJ lens to its work this year, and the GC has identified as one of its goals for this year as helping the Board with that goal.

We discussed ways to approach digging into the work of applying a racial justice lens in ways that go beyond reflection. As an agenda item it’s been mostly reflection oriented, not an action-oriented agenda item about translating our support of racial equity into action by the church.

We discussed the idea of boiling down the guidance found in the Race Forward (RF) materials into a smallish set of bullet points that could be used as a tool to help the GC and the Board apply a racial justice lens to our work. We also discussed the possibility that this approach might not be the most helpful. Since the Race Forward team has already done great work in creating rubrics for use, we could consider using one of their rubrics.

As an exercise, we chose a decision point and “ran it through” the set of 5 questions on the last page of the Race Forward packet. We chose the monthly creation of an agenda for Board meetings for the exercise. Then we proceeded to ask the five questions listed about that decision point and to generate a variety of answers; we also developed our own, additional questions that might be important to ask during Board-related “decision/choice points.” The exercise showed us that this method is well worth trying for the Board.

The exercise showed us the value of developing a set of questions to ask of each agenda item, modeled on the RF choice points questions. Here are the questions we generated to be asked about the creation of the agenda:

What voices are represented in the creation of the agenda? Whose voice is not represented here?
What is the board doing to support and advance the work of this church in improving racial

equity in our world? What assumptions are being made? Who are the stakeholders? Who is impacted by this decision? What is that impact likely to be? Is there an opportunity to do positive work against racism in this decision? What potentially harmful impacts are we overlooking?

We also noted the challenges of having uncomfortable conversations as a Board, especially when one or more of us feel the need to call out unchecked white privilege. We need to have the tools and the courage to speak candidly to one another – to make mistakes and to reconcile mistakes.

Our questions around this are:

How does the Board create an environment of trust and open conversation and dialogue while also holding itself as a body and as individual members accountable to the commitment we've made to advance racial equity? How are we being equity-explicit or not? The purpose is to move and grow toward equity.

We also talked about a few examples of decisions to which it would have been helpful to apply the Race Forward choice points rubric. One example involves the invitation of a small group of trustees to meet with the capital campaign consultant. That decision probably did not reflect the application of a racial justice lens. We might ask, "Why those three people? What voices and communities were represented? What voices and communities were not represented there?"

While we discussed the possibility of examining the Visionary Goals through a racial justice lens, we moved away from that idea, considering it likely to be abstract rather than concrete.

Emergency sessions:

The Board would like the GC to develop guidelines, if emergency sessions aren't covered in the bylaws, as an amendment to the bylaws. **David will investigate the GPH and/or bylaws.**

July, August, September monitoring schedule items

- July: Ends outcomes; archive Board's shared drive
- August: Strategic plan (annual work plan)
- September: Treatment of staff - job descriptions and position criteria; Staff grievance procedure (GMT); Treatment of volunteers (provision of general team and committee member expectations, relevant policies and procedures, guidance on how teams, committees, and volunteers should relate with staff) **Richard will inquire about the status of these items.**

Additional discussion of GC 2015-16 goals

We tabled discussion of additional goals till next month. The list of goals we developed previously is as follows:

- Guidelines to ensure all voices are heard in committee and Board meetings: Update on discussion with the Board in May.
- Congregational survey, Visionary Goals, and mission evaluation.
- Strategic Plan's upcoming "expiration" (6 years after the VGs were adopted). Incorporate potential Capital Campaign.
- Revisit the dashboard – revise into something that would help us do strategic work better.
- Digital ministry.

- Racial justice lens and decision points.

2015-16 meeting dates

We will meet second Mondays from 6:30 to 8:00PM.

An Introduction to Racial Equity Assessment Tools

Governing For Racial Equity
March 2014

Terry Keleher
Race Forward

About Race Forward

- Race Forward advances racial justice through research, media, and practice.
- Race Forward brings systemic analysis and an innovative approach to complex race issues to help people take effective action towards racial equity.
- Race Forward publishes the daily news site Colorlines and presents Facing Race, the country's largest multiracial conference on racial justice.

Racial Justice

Racial Justice
is the systemic fair treatment
of all people
that results in
equal opportunities and outcomes
for everyone.

Implicit Bias

- Implicit biases are pervasive
- People are often unaware of their implicit bias
- Implicit biases predict behavior
- People differ in levels of implicit bias

-- *Project Implicit* (www.projectimplicit.net)

Examples of Implicit Bias

- Doctors are less likely to prescribe life-saving care to blacks.
- Managers are less likely to call back or hire members of a different ethnic group.
- NBA referees are more likely to subtly favor players with whom they share a racial identity.
- Teachers call on boys more often than girls.

Source: racial bias examples from <http://writers.unconsciousbias.org/unconsciousbias/>



AP Associated Press AP - Tue Aug 30, 11:31 AM ET

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it

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3:47 AM ET

Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

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• Katrina's Effects, at a Glance AP - Tue Aug 30, 1:26 PM ET

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Implicit Bias is: Individual AND Institutional

- A lot of racial inequities occur without intention or malice. It does not require “racists.” Implicit bias helps explain how racism can be subtle in appearance but significant in impact.
- In institutions, the bias of individuals is routinely replicated through collective decisions and actions. It becomes compounded unless it’s consciously counteracted.
- “Implicit Bias offers the idea that discrimination and bias are *social*, rather than *individual* issues, and that we can thus all participate in promoting equality.”

--American Values Project

Implicit Bias and Public Policy

- Most policies are *facially* neutral (race silent) but not *racially* neutral—they have negative or positive racial impacts.
- Negative racial impacts may or may not have been intentional. Positive racial impacts often require intentionality.
- When racial impacts are not consciously considered during the lawmaking/decision-making process, there is more likelihood that negative racial impacts will result--implicit bias is the default.

Choice Points: The Crossroads to Change



Choice Points

- Choice points are decision-making opportunities that influence outcomes.
- The cumulative impacts of many small choices can be as significant as the impacts of big decisions.
- When we're conscious of choice points and the related impacts, we're less likely to replicate implicit bias and the status quo, and we open new possibilities for equitable change.

Choice Points: Examples

Personal	Institutional
Consumer decisions: where to shop, what to buy, or boycott?	Planning: what to change and prioritize in programs/workplans?
Volunteer work: what causes to get involved in?	Budgeting: what items to prioritize, add or cut?
Charitable contributions: what organizations to support?	Personnel: who to hire, retain, promote, or develop as leaders?
Socializing: who to spend time with?	Policy Development: what to propose or modify?
Voting: which candidates or causes to support?	Practices: routines/habits to continue, change, or cut?

Using Choice Points: Organizational Example

- **Citizen Action of New York (CANY)** has adopted a standard set of questions to consider when analyzing social issues they want to address. This helps them think about how different racial groups are affected and whether to explicitly address racism in their framing of the issue.
- This deliberate practice serves as an **equity prime**—a reminder that evokes consideration and consciousness of racial/gender impacts and racial/gender equity—during an important choice point; thereby helping to counteract unconscious bias.

Choice Points in the Criminal Justice System

- The criminal justice system has many decision-making points and decision-makers where discretion is exercised.
- “For a single defendant, these biases may surface for various decisions makers repeatedly in policing, charging, bail, plea bargaining, pretrial motions, evidentiary motions, witness credibility, lawyer persuasiveness, guilt determination, sentencing recommendations, sentencing itself, appeal, and so on. Even small biases, at each stage may aggregate into a substantial effect.” -- UCLA law professor Jerry Kang
- To change an entire system, we have to examine how decisions are made throughout the system, at every choice point, by every decision-maker.

Using Choice Points to Advance Equity and Inclusion

1. Where are the decision-making points that affect outcomes?
2. What decisions/actions may be reinforcing the status quo, implicit bias and current inequities?
3. What alternative action options could produce different outcomes?
4. Which action will best advance equity and inclusion?
5. What reminders, supports and accountability systems can be structured into routine practices to keep equity as a high priority?

Cultivating Equity Mindfulness

- We can choose to create the space and support to act

Consciously

Consistently and

Courageously

on our values.



- We can practice pushing the “pause button” to interrupt our patterns, fears and biases. We can develop “equity muscles and memory” to override old habits and responses.
- We can learn to prime ourselves and others to take mindful action.

Pair & Share: Using Choice Points

- 1. Identify a choice point:** What is a choice point in your own work where you have some influence on a decision or course of action that may affect racial/gender outcomes?
- 2. Generate some options:** For that choice point, identify some alternative actions that could lead to different and more equitable outcomes.
- 3. Select a new course of action:** Decide which option could leverage the most equitable change.

Institutionalizing Racial Equity

Implicit Bias	Explicit Equity
Unaware of choice points	Builds in decision-making guides that evoke consideration of equity
Exclusive of stakeholders	Fosters active engagement and empowerment of stakeholders
Not attentive to race, gender, income and other inequities	Gives distinct, specific and sufficient attention to key disparities/inequities
Ignores barriers to access	Supports and implements strategies to remove barriers
Does not consider racial impacts	Systematically analyzes potential impacts on disadvantaged groups

Explicit Equity (“Equity-Mindedness”)

- **Proactively seeks to eliminate inequities and advance racial equity** in policy and program development, budgeting, planning and decision-making.
- **Thoughtfully considers the impacts** of proposed decisions on different racial/ethnic groups, with added attention to stakeholders who are most disadvantaged or marginalized.
- **Identifies clear goals and objectives**, measureable outcomes, and tasks and timelines. Develops mechanisms for successful implementation, documentation and evaluation, with ample staffing, funding and support for success and sustainability.

Equity Primes as Debiasing Tools

- Judicial Bench Cards
- Equity-Driven Planning
- Pocket Guide to Budgeting
- Equity Impact Assessments

History: Assessing Impacts

Environmental Impact Statements (EIS): required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, are a decision-making tool that describes the positive and negative effects of proposed actions “significantly affecting the quality of the human environment,” and identifies alternative actions that can be taken to mitigate adverse impacts.



History: Preventing Problems

Voting Rights Act, Section 5

Preclearance: 1965 Civil Rights legislation designed to outlaw discriminatory voting practices. Section 5 of the Act requires that the U.S. Dept. of Justice to "preclear" any attempt to change "any voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting..." in any "covered jurisdiction."



History: A Mandate for Systemic Racial Equity

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, United Kingdom: established a statutory *general* duty for government authorities to promote race equality by:

- 1) eliminating unlawful discrimination;
- 2) promoting equality of opportunity; and
- 3) promoting good relations between persons of different racial groups.

The general duty was expanded in 2010 to include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.



History: A Mandate for Systemic Racial Equity

- The United Kingdom also required government agencies to use Racial Equality Impact Assessments (REIAs).
- They defined these as “ a way of systematically and thoroughly assessing, and consulting on, the effects that a proposed policy is likely to have on people, depending on their racial group The main purpose of a race equality impact assessment is to pre-empt the possibility that your proposed policy could affect some racial groups unfavourably.” (UK Race Relations Act, 2000)

Why Use REIAs?

- To engage stakeholders in decision-making, especially those most adversely affected by current conditions.
- To bring conscious attention to racial inequities and impacts *before* decisions get made.
- To avoid or minimize adverse impacts and unintended consequences.
- To prevent racism from occurring in the first place—to get ahead of the curve of rapidly replicating racism.
- To affirmatively advance racial equity, inclusion and unity.

Governance

King County, WA: Equity and Social Justice Initiative asks all departments to use a “fair and just principle” to achieve equitable opportunities for all, and to use an “Equity Impact Review Tool” to consciously address the elimination of racism in the areas of:

- 1) policymaking & decision-making
- 2) organizational operations, and
- 3) community engagement and communications.



Governance

Seattle: Race and Social Justice Initiative asks all departments to use “Racial Equity Analysis” questions for policy development and budget-making. Questions include how proposed actions support:

- economic equity and contracting;
- immigrant & refugee access to services;
- public engagement and outreach;
- workforce equity; and
- capacity building.



Policymaking

Oregon Criminal Justice and Child Welfare

Bill: House Bill 2053 would allow any lawmaker to request a study analyzing the impact of child welfare and criminal justice laws on racial and ethnic communities.



Stakeholder Engagement is Key



Racial Equity Impact Assessment

What are Racial Equity Impact Assessments?

A Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) is a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. REIAs are used to minimize unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. The REIA can be a vital tool for preventing institutional racism and for identifying new options to remedy long-standing inequities.

Why are they needed?

REIAs are used to reduce, eliminate and prevent racial discrimination and inequities. The persistence of deep racial disparities and divisions across society is evidence of institutional racism--the routine, often invisible and unintentional, production of inequitable social opportunities and outcomes. When racial equity is not consciously addressed, racial inequality is often unconsciously replicated.

When should it be conducted?

REIAs are best conducted during the decision-making process, prior to enacting new proposals. They are used to inform decisions, much like environmental impact statements, fiscal impact reports and workplace risk assessments.

Where are they in use?

The use of REIAs in the U.S. is relatively new and still somewhat limited, but new interest and initiatives are on the rise. The United Kingdom has been using them with success for nearly a decade.

EXAMPLES OF RACIAL JUSTICE EQUITY IMPACTS

Equity and Social Justice Initiative

King County, WA

The county government is using an Equity Impact Review Tool to intentionally consider the promotion of equity in the development and implementation of key policies, programs and funding decisions.

Race and Social Justice Initiative

Seattle, WA

City Departments are using a set of Racial Equity Analysis questions as filters for policy development and budget making.

Minority Impact Statements

Iowa and Connecticut

Both states have passed legislation which requires the examination of the racial and ethnic impacts of all new sentencing laws prior to passage. Commissions have been created in Illinois and Wisconsin to consider adopting a similar review process. Related measures are being proposed in other states, based on a model developed by the Sentencing Project.

Proposed Racial Equity Impact Policy

St. Paul, MN

If approved by the city council, a Racial Equity Impact Policy would require city staff and developers to compile a "Racial Equity Impact Report" for all development projects that receive a public subsidy of \$100,000 or more.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

United Kingdom

Since 2000, all public authorities required to develop and publish race equality plans must assess proposed policies using a Race Equality Impact Assessment, a systematic process for analysis.

Racial Equity Impact Assessment **GUIDE**

Below are sample questions to use to anticipate, assess and prevent potential adverse consequences of proposed actions on different racial groups.

1. IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

Which racial/ethnic groups may be most affected by and concerned with the issues related to this proposal?

2. ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Have stakeholders from different racial/ethnic groups—especially those most adversely affected—been informed, meaningfully involved and authentically represented in the development of this proposal? Who's missing and how can they be engaged?

3. IDENTIFYING AND DOCUMENTING RACIAL INEQUITIES

Which racial/ethnic groups are currently most advantaged and most disadvantaged by the issues this proposal seeks to address? How are they affected differently? What quantitative and qualitative evidence of inequality exists? What evidence is missing or needed?

4. EXAMINING THE CAUSES

What factors may be producing and perpetuating racial inequities associated with this issue? How did the inequities arise? Are they expanding or narrowing? Does the proposal address root causes? If not, how could it?

5. CLARIFYING THE PURPOSE

What does the proposal seek to accomplish? Will it reduce disparities or discrimination?

6. CONSIDERING ADVERSE IMPACTS

What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from this policy? Which racial/ethnic groups could be negatively affected? How could adverse impacts be prevented or minimized?

7. ADVANCING EQUITABLE IMPACTS

What positive impacts on equality and inclusion, if any, could result from this proposal? Which racial/ethnic groups could benefit? Are there further ways to maximize equitable opportunities and impacts?

8. EXAMINING ALTERNATIVES OR IMPROVEMENTS

Are there better ways to reduce racial disparities and advance racial equity? What provisions could be changed or added to ensure positive impacts on racial equity and inclusion?

9. ENSURING VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Is the proposal realistic, adequately funded, with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and enforcement. Are there provisions to ensure ongoing data collection, public reporting, stakeholder participation and public accountability?

10. IDENTIFYING SUCCESS INDICATORS

What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks? How will impacts be documented and evaluated? How will the level, diversity and quality of ongoing stakeholder engagement be assessed?



Using a Racial Equity Impact Analysis in the Minneapolis Public Schools

By Jermaine Toney and Terry Keleher

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Prompted by a community-based alliance called the Education Equity Organizing Collaborative, the Minneapolis Board of Education agreed, in 2008, to use a racial impact assessment to inform decision making related to its Changing School Options initiative.¹ The initiative was a school board proposal to cut school district operating costs by reorganizing school enrollment and transportation routes. The school board's use of the community-driven "Race, Cultural and Economic Equity Impact Assessment" resulted in the selection of a plan that mitigated any adverse impact on communities of color.²

The Minneapolis School Board Equity Impact Assessment

The Minneapolis Board of Education sought, in spring 2008, the Education Equity Organizing Collaborative's support for a proposed \$60 million school funding referendum on the November 2008 ballot.³ The collaborative, being a multiracial and

¹For an in-depth discussion of racial impact statements and their uses in advocacy, see William Kennedy et al., *Putting Race Back on the Table: Racial Impact Statements*, in this issue.

²Minneapolis Public Schools, *Race, Cultural and Economic Equity Impact Assessment of Changing School Options* (2009) ((1) Minneapolis Public Schools, *Changing School Options Revised Plan and Variations: Pre-reading for 7/14 Board Work Session*; (2) Minneapolis Public Schools, *Changing School Options Revised Plan and Variations: Appendix to Pre-reading for 7/14 Board Work Session*; and (3) Minneapolis Public Schools, *Changing School Options, Revised Plans and Variations, Appendix B, Attendance Boundary Maps*) (all on file with Jermaine Toney).

³See Organizing Apprenticeship Project, Education Equity Organizing Collaborative (n.d.), <http://bit.ly/1bxR6PV>.

multicultural alliance of community organizations advocating equity in public schools, was seen as a civic player. The collaborative's partners at the time included Migizi Communications (an American Indian organization), Somali Action Alliance, Isaiah (a multiracial faith-based coalition), the Coalition of Black Churches, and the Organizing Apprenticeship Project (which supports community organizers and racial justice advocacy and convened and staffed the collaborative).

The collaborative advised the school board that a racial, cultural, and economic impact analysis of how students of color, American Indian students, and other schoolchildren would be affected by approval of the referendum would have to be done before the collaborative could support the referendum. The collaborative commissioned the Organizing Apprenticeship Project to conduct the racial impact analysis because the project had analyzed the racial impact of state legislative and budgetary proposals.⁴ The project had, in turn, received training and consulting from our Applied Research Center, a national racial justice think tank and promoter of equity tools such as legislative report cards on racial equity and racial impact assessments.

The school district's enrollment for the 2008–2009 school year was 40 percent African American, 30 percent white, 17 percent Latino, 9 percent Asian, and 4.5 percent American Indian.⁵ Even though students of color constituted 70 percent of total enrollment in the district, there was a wide gap in reading proficiency test scores between students of color and white students.⁶ In the 2006–2007

school year only 31 percent of the district's African American students were proficient in reading, while 35 percent of Latino students, 33 percent of American Indian students, and 43 percent of Asian students were proficient in reading. In comparison, 82 percent of white students were proficient in reading.⁷ Only 32 percent of low-income students, that is, those who received a free or reduced lunch, were proficient in reading.⁸

The Organizing Apprenticeship Project's racial impact analysis revealed that if voters failed to support additional school funding, the academic achievement gap across different racial groups would widen.⁹ Voter approval of the referendum would result in the maintenance, but not expansion, of disparities. The collaborative actively and visibly supported the referendum. Voters approved the referendum by a historic margin, with significant support from voters of color.

That same year the Minneapolis Board of Education again sought support from the collaborative, this time for the Changing School Options initiative, a proposal to save operating costs by reorganizing services. The initiative offered three options to solve the fiscal difficulties brought about by declining student enrollment and rising transportation costs: school closures, rewired pathways in school enrollment options, and changed school transportation routes.

This time the collaborative asked the Minneapolis School Board to conduct an equity impact assessment of the initiative's proposed options. The collaborative supplied an assessment framework: the Pocket Guide to Budget Proposals: Racial and Economic Equity Assessment

⁴See Kennedy et al., *supra* note 1 (discussing Organizing Apprenticeship Project type of racial impact statement and how it has been used elsewhere).

⁵Minneapolis Public Schools, Summary Statistics: Racial/Ethnic Breakdown from 1978–2009 (Dec. 28, 2009), <http://bit.ly/169zc3M>.

⁶Dave Heistad, Research, Evaluation and Assessment, Minneapolis Public Schools, Achievement Gap Trends (n.d.), <http://bit.ly/18FWqCn>.

⁷*Id.* at 7.

⁸Research, Evaluation Assessment Department, Minneapolis Public Schools, Spring 2010 MCA-II and MTELL District Summary Results 5 (July 1, 2010), <http://bit.ly/17czk00>.

⁹Jermaine Toney, Organizing Apprenticeship Project, Weighing the Racial Equity Impacts of [Minneapolis] Schools Referendum (Sept. 30, 2008), <http://bit.ly/15QJa86>.

Questions.¹⁰ The Organizing Apprenticeship Project previously used and shared the Pocket Guide with state lawmakers to assess the racial impact of state budget proposals.

The Pocket Guide has five assessment questions:

1. How does the proposed action (policy, budget, or investment decision) impact racial and economic disparities in Minnesota?
2. How does the proposed action support and advance racial and economic equity in such areas as education, contracting, immigrant and refugee access to services, health, workforce and economic development?
3. Have voices of groups affected by the proposal, budget, or investment decision been involved with its development? What solutions were proposed by these groups and communities?
4. What do you need to ensure that proposals are successful in addressing disparities—what resources, what timelines, and what monitoring will help ensure success for achieving racial and economic equity?
5. If your assessment shows that a proposed policy, budget, or investment decision will likely increase disparities, what alternatives can you explore? What modifications are needed to maximize racial and economic equity outcomes and reduce racial and economic disparities?¹¹

The board voted unanimously to authorize the district staff to use the assess-

ment. The board was eager to know how the proposed changes would affect their constituents. The assessment also gave the board an opportunity to ensure that the initiative's benefits or harms would be evenly distributed across different racial groups.

Though initially reluctant to conduct the analysis, the school administration eventually created an interdepartmental team and secured a contractor to help in the research, analysis, and writing of the assessment. Some team members saw a gap between what the collaborative was requesting and what data the school could realistically compile for the assessment. The school board member assigned to coordinate the analysis convened a face-to-face meeting with key board members and the working team. They all began to see an accurate way to model the impact of the changes by using high research standards.

The collaborative wanted to ensure that community organizations had access to accurate information. But some members of the school staff research team feared public scrutiny and critique of the school's racial impact analysis. Again, face-to-face meetings between collaborative leaders and the staff team helped diffuse this tension. The meetings revealed a shared commitment to equity and an agreement to use data to bring out the truth in order to allow the board to choose an implementation plan that would prevent disparities. This partnership opened a path for a doable and useful analysis.

The main task in using the assessment tool was to pull together data to see how each identified option for implementing the initiative would have an impact on different students and communities. The district team gathered data on student enrollment differences by resident zone; the team paid close attention to the proportion of students of color, English language learners, enrollment trends over

¹⁰Jermaine Toney, Organizing Apprenticeship Project, Pocket Guide to Budget Proposals: Racial and Economic Equity Assessment Questions (March 18, 2009), <http://bit.ly/1ak9gTZ>.

¹¹*Id.*

the last five years for kindergarten and certain grades, and attrition within the public schools. The team also analyzed by resident zone the number of magnet programs, the proposed school closures, the programs proposed to be closed, the number of students who would and would not have to change schools. And the team looked at the cost savings of each option and the number and racial percentages of students who would be disrupted, that is, students who would have to change schools.

The district's racial equity analysis revealed that Plan A, which established solid school boundaries, saved the district \$8.5 million while potentially disrupting 9,200 students. The plan disrupted 39 percent of students of color compared to 52 percent of white students. Plan B, which rebalanced zone capacity, saved a little less than Plan A, \$8.2 million, while disrupting only 8,550 students. Under this plan, 43 percent of students of color were disrupted compared to 33 percent of white students. Plan C, which minimized disruption, had the largest savings, \$9 million, and disrupted the fewest: 4,920 students. Plan C caused the disruption of 22 percent of students of color compared to 25 percent of white students.¹² Plan C was clearly the best plan for all kids facing disruption—students of color, English language learners, low-income students, and white students. Still, this final option meant that major schools serving Somali students would be closed while many American Indian students would be forced to change schools.

Because the equity analysis broke down the data by race and culture, each community was able to see how the school initiative's options would have an impact on it. American Indians constituted only 5 percent of the district's student population, but 26 percent of those students would have been adversely affected by the plan. The Somali community would have been adversely affected by the proposed

closure of two schools; the Somalis' access to an anchor school critical to their community would have been affected.

The school district, with an accurate picture of the potential racial effects of the different options, now had an opportunity to make appropriate changes in the school district's proposals and to engage direct stakeholders in collective problem solving.

The district, in consultation with American Indian leaders, tackled the disproportionate adverse impact on the American Indian community by taking a flexible approach to the proposed new boundaries. For example, an American Indian parent whose child's school would now be outside the new boundary could choose to keep the child at the old school or send the child to a school within the new boundary. This flexibility allowed for more parent choice and gave the community the chance to preserve community cohesion. According to one leader,

this almost never happens. Normally, the parent has to follow what the new rules of the game are. This time, the policy was not so arbitrarily implemented because it had the flexibility to take on parent choice. This approach was more empowering for the parents and American Indian community in general. The American Indian community is used to being victimized by policy. This choice flipped that script on its head.¹³

Similarly, communication between the school district and Somali Action Alliance resulted in maintaining an elementary school that fed into a middle school with a solid performance record and reputation for educating Somali students at this critical developmental age. Without the impact analysis, the feeder school would have likely been closed.

¹²Minneapolis Public Schools, Changing School Options Revised Plan and Variations: Pre-reading for 7/14 Board Work Session, *supra* note 2, PowerPoint slide 14. This document has Plans A, B4, and D. We changed the name of Plan B4 to Plan B, and Plan D to Plan C, for simplicity.

¹³Telephone Interview by Jermaine Toney with Elaine Salinas, President, Migizi Communications (Jan. 19, 2012).

The difference that the racial impact assessment made—affording community participation and a better solution—was significant for thousands of families and schoolchildren. According to a school board member,

had the district not done the Equity Impact Analysis, we would not have known the upcoming impacts. In general, it is just good practice to be aware of the impact of a district's decisions—to see and think about impact of decisions. This has to be more of a discipline, not a onetime thing. It has to be embedded in all the work—part of operating as a school district. Not just responding to a community group request but it has to be part of how the district does business.¹⁴

Lessons Learned

The Minneapolis Public Schools' experience in developing an equity impact assessment with community participation has much to teach us. We advocates who plan to do equity assessments should keep in mind five points.

1. **Stakeholder engagement from the outset of planning and decision making is critical.** Those most affected by the proposals at issue must be actively and authentically engaged in decision making. In Minneapolis parents were able to exert influence and shape how they would be affected *before* decisions were made rather than *after* the fact.
2. **Multiracial alliances and analyses are needed.** Communities coming together across racial and cultural lines can be powerful in driving change. Instead of competing racial lines, a multiracial and multiethnic approach to analysis and decision making can generate solutions that benefit people across all races, espe-

cially racial groups that are currently or potentially most disadvantaged.

3. **School district and community collaboration is well worth the investment.** Face-to-face meetings and the development of understanding, trust, and a working partnership pay off in producing better solutions. Collectively partners bring more perspectives, knowledge, and expertise to creating workable and equitable solutions.
4. **The use of race equity research tools is critical to success.** Having concrete frameworks and guides for conducting racial equity impact assessments helps ensure that questions are considered thoughtfully and systematically. Racial equity tools are most effective when they are part of an ongoing broader institutionwide and communitywide strategy for achieving equitable outcomes.¹⁵
5. **Equity impact assessments need to be institutionalized.** Building the use of equity tools into standard protocols can help support and sustain success so that their use is not simply dependent on the goodwill of individuals. Institutions and organizations committed to providing high-quality service to all people can explore ways to integrate racial equity tools at multiple decision-making points, and by multiple decision makers, in order to advance systemwide benefits: "We must be vigilant around equity issues. The system will act like the system, going right back to old behavior real quickly. This is why we must have campaigns, but also we must have policies that institutionalize equity."¹⁶

Our civil rights legal framework has a strong focus on remedying problems once they have occurred. And, increasingly, lawmakers and jurists are taking a "color-blind" approach to creating and interpreting laws. Yet many laws

¹⁴Telephone interview by Jermaine Toney with Jill Stever-Zeitlin, Minneapolis School Board Member (Jan. 9, 2012).

¹⁵See Kennedy et al., *supra* note 1.

¹⁶Salinas, *supra* note 13.

that are *facially* neutral—silent on race—in their intent, are not *racially* neutral in their impact: racial equity impact assessments—while still needing further refinement and wider application—provide a proactive, participatory, and prospective approach to racial equity efforts. If developed collectively and implemented effectively, they can actually prevent ra-

cial disparities from occurring in the first place. Replacing color blindness with “equity-mindedness”—the conscious and collective consideration of racial impact during decision making—offers hope that we can affirmatively counteract racial bias and advance racial equity and social inclusion.¹⁷

¹⁷Kennedy et al., *supra* note 1.



Using Choice Points to Advance Equity

1. **Identify a Choice Point:** What is one of your points of opportunity to make or influence a decision that may affect equitable outcomes?

2. **Assess Impacts:** What are the impacts of current decisions and actions that may be unintentionally reinforcing bias, barriers or inequities?

3. **Generate Options:** What are some alternative action options that could produce different outcomes? (Try to generate several of them.)

4. **Decide Action:** Which option will generate the most leverage, momentum or gain towards advancing equity and inclusion?

5. **Change Habits:** What reminders or “equity primes” can be structured into you routine practices and protocols to make equity an ongoing priority and habit? What relationships, supports, incentives or accountability measures could help?