

## Superintendent's Community Advisory Committee on Investing in Educational Excellence

### Meeting #2

August 11, 2005, 7:30-9:30 a.m.

John Stanford Center Auditorium

### Budget Overview

Steve Nielsen, Finance Director Seattle Schools, continued where he left off at the first meeting on a PowerPoint budget overview. Due to lack of time this presentation also was cut short, but comments and actions included:

- The State and District have different account activity reporting structures. The committee would like to see definitions and expenditures for both structures.
- Expenditure comparisons with other Washington school districts show Seattle spends about \$1,000 more per student (primarily because we are grant rich and our levy is slightly higher). Those extra expenses are in Special Education (mandated), Bilingual (not mandated), pupil transportation (twice as high as others due to our bussing and enrollment plans), school administration (directly related to the number of buildings we have), and maintenance and operations (higher due to the number of square feet we have). The committee requested a deep delve into costs per square foot and also a complete list of mandated and choice expenditures.
- If we had higher market share, how would it affect our revenue? It depends on the types of students: special needs students would cost us money and regular students would make us a little money. The committee requested data on our current market share from different parts of the city, what type of student would help us, and their current location. (John will bring in newspaper article??—sr)

### Academic Plan Overview

Superintendent Raj Manhas made big picture comparisons with school districts nationwide. We all seem to be in similar places. What he sees as needed is 1) decisions that are sustainable (trying the latest thing and then stopping it in a couple of years does not work), 2) long-term solutions (lacking nationwide), and 3) full system alignment for sustainability.

Steve Wilson, Chief Academic Officer Seattle Schools, said solid long-term curriculum planning is needed to meet the realities of the WASL and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. This is the first year of "high-stakes" testing for our sophomores and if they don't pass the WASL, they won't graduate.

Wilson said his team conducted a review of three task force recommendations, and summarized the findings:

- The largest single difficulty is the discipline gap. Discipline is administered primarily on students of color and usually comes in the form of suspensions. This

type of discipline may help the teacher, but it does not help the student and as a method of discipline is no longer acceptable.

- Solutions must be data-driven.
- Focus must be on reading, writing, mathematics, and science.
- Students need to enjoy what they do and be successful so they do not want to drop out.
- Partnerships are needed between schools, families, the City, Alliance for Education, and Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

We have to change our entire approach. High Schools especially need systemic change for full curriculum/program alignment districtwide which is based on best practices and small learning communities (schools within schools, etc.).

Jane Goetz, Instructional Services Director, said there is a cross-team of central administration (academic, human resources, business, etc.) who are meeting daily to complete the academic plan for submission to the School Board on August 24. There are three major plans that have been reviewed for consistency: The Five-Year Plan, District Improvement Plan (part of NCLB), and the 1999 Standards-Based Learning System. Through the reviews it became clear that when programs are sustained, they make a difference. Also, building professional communities is essential: teachers need professional development and the best method is using on-site real-time classroom learning which provides continuous loop feedback for real improvement. This same cross-team reviewed every bullet in the Five-Year Plan to see if it was included in the District Improvement Plan. A gap analysis revealed that high schools were not included.

As part of the Academic Plan, detailed action plans will be developed for: Professional Learning Communities (teacher training); Reading, Writing, and Mathematics; Personalization (having significant adults in children's lives); Family and Community Involvement; and Cultural Competence (added after printing of Academic Plan Overview).

Financial implications of the Academic Plan? Three major areas will need funding: Professional Development Coaches in the schools (very expensive), teachers coming to central for planning (with each other and for professional development), and new materials (math has the highest need). There is budget attached to each action plan.

The committee asked if there will be fair teacher evaluations to remove under-performing teachers because the price we pay for under-performing teachers is very high. The teacher's contract has a stipulation that the teacher evaluation process will be reviewed. A cross-represented group has been working on this issue for a year and is close to finishing. The results will have to be ratified by the teachers.

#### Community Engagement Plan

Co-Chair John Warner reviewed the plan. The basic parameter and tone for the public meetings is to encourage people to share possible solutions. The public meetings are not

intended to be forums for airing problems, but rather a community sharing of potential solutions to problems.

The committee stated they want specific recommendations for how to shepherd the results of the community engagement process (and the results of their final report) into City and State political realities.

The committee also recommended knowing what we are investing in (e.g. what is a quality high school?) and what do the parents/stakeholders value. It was also suggested that the committee hear from State officials about their perspective on efforts they think are working.

#### Subcommittee Structure

Three subcommittees were formed and will start meeting as soon as possible: Financial, Academic, and Communications.

#### Sharepoint

It was recommended that meeting agendas be included on Sharepoint and a “tab” will be added for each subcommittee’s work.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.