

SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Status Report
on the
Superintendent's
Community Advisory Committee for
Investing in Educational Excellence

May 3, 2006



Superintendent Raj Manhas

Strategic Implementation Team

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I. The Appointment by the Superintendent of the Community Advisory Committee for Investing on Educational Excellence

In April 2005, Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Raj Manhas presented a plan to close and consolidate schools. The plan was designed both to improve academic effectiveness of the District's schools, and to improve the District's short and long term financial outlook. Although the closure plan was withdrawn due to lack of public support, the District's need to improve quality of schools and to reduce budget shortfalls continued to exist. Given the community's outspoken desire to assist the District in managing these two needs, Superintendent Raj Manhas appointed a 14-member Community Advisory Committee on Investing in Educational Excellence (CACIEE). The Committee was appointed to devise a short and long term financial strategy for the District.

The Committee began its work in July 2005, and met for six months. Its expertise in finance, budget management, and leadership, as well as its communications and K-12 academic experience, resulted in a comprehensive report that addressed many of the District's most pressing problems. That final report, received on February 10, 2006, made recommendations about how the District could conserve dollars and create a viable, sustainable long-term financial strategy. The Committee's recommendations also dealt with many aspects of the District as an academic institution, and recommended the infusion of an additional \$24.5 million of state funding needed to support the educational reforms it recommended.

Upon receiving the Committee's final report, the Superintendent determined that the breadth and scope of recommendations required comprehensive review and implementation, and that specific staff members needed to be tasked to do that work. Therefore, the Superintendent appointed a three-member Strategic Implementation Team, whose charge was to research, analyze, and develop implementation plans for the recommendations, and to work on systems change within the District. This report outlines the District's current activities in light of the recommendations.

II. The Need for Systemic Change in the Operation of Seattle Public Schools

The three-member Strategic Implementation Team, made up of two current and one former staff member, began its work in March 2006 by interviewing staff members whose work was related to the various recommendations. For example, the team met with representatives of the District Special Education and Head Start programs, both of which provide preschool services, as well as with the District's Kindergarten Transitions office to discuss the pre-K and kindergarten recommendation.

The interviews had numerous goals, including placing the recommendations in the context of the District as a whole; gaining insight to barriers that might arise to implementing the recommendations; and determining whether the relevant staff members had already begun work on the recommendation. A secondary goal of the interviews was to talk with staff members about the organizational structure and culture of the District. We recognized from the beginning that successful implementation of strategies would hinge on re-vamping our structure, and that structural change cannot be sustained without cultural change.

Not surprisingly, the cultural part of each interview was what the interviewees most wanted to discuss, and common themes arose in every interview. These are also themes that the Superintendent's Committee recognized, as have other committees that have worked on the District's behalf.

The most prevalent theme, one that implicates both structure and culture, and the one people most wanted to change, was the "silo" effect. This is where each person does his or her own job, not working collaboratively, not even, in many cases, knowing that there are others working on the same topic. It is clear that to change the culture in the District, the silos must be eliminated. This will be addressed in part through a re-organization of the Learning and Teaching department (discussed later), and through, in the Operations department, a focus on academic needs by reaching out to and collaborating more fully with the Learning and Teaching department.

The other recurring theme, and one that the District needs to nurture, was the overwhelming energy and dedication to the students in our schools. Whether speaking to technology staff or teachers, curriculum leaders or hiring managers, employees work for Seattle Public Schools because they feel that within this District they can make a difference in the lives of students. Refocusing on student needs and academics will increase employees' satisfaction, as they see their contribution to the District making a difference in students' lives. Additionally, the District needs to contemplate and evaluate how to reward and recognize those employees whose work has a direct benefit on our ability to serve students.

Given these organizational realities, it is clear that to be successful, the Superintendent's Committee's recommendations must be implemented within the structure of systemic change in the operation of the District. No more plans, no more action steps, no more talking—we need a reformed system, and right now is our opportunity to make it.

III. Creating Organizational Change

When an organization is making the type of change that we are contemplating, there are two broad types of change that must occur: technical changes, and adaptive changes. The technical changes are comparatively easy—for example, choosing and purchasing new accounting software to provide a better budgeting process is a technical change. The adaptive changes are harder—these are the cultural changes that need to happen to really turn an organization around. An example of an adaptive change that needs to happen within Seattle Public Schools is the removal of silos so that we work collaboratively on behalf of our students.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that removing the silos will be the easiest part of this change. Our learned behavior of blocking reform and territorialism that has grown out of the silos (or perhaps created the silos) will be our most difficult hurdle. The creation of a system of accountability will allow us to teach, and learn, new behavior that will make the system, and its employees, stronger.

Using the District's existing plans and the recommendations of the Superintendent's Committee, two major areas to begin this work were identified: reorganizing the Learning and Teaching department and realigning our facilities to meet our academic and fiscal needs, through school closures and consolidations. Both of these areas include adaptive and technical changes, and both need to occur in order that we are able to better focus our resources and energies on our students. We also believe these two areas are the jumping off point for a variety of other changes, including many of the action steps in the District's plans and the Committee's recommendations.

While school closures were contemplated by the Superintendent's Committee, the issue of reorganizing the Learning and Teaching department was not. However, a majority of the Committee's recommendations were academically focused, and we determined that implementing the recommendations, without changing the system we work in, would only change aspects of our work, not the work in general.

IV. Implementation of the Recommendations—Primary Priorities

Learning and Teaching Reorganization

Led by the District's new Chief Academic Officer, and based on interviews and research, the Learning and Teaching reorganization focused on three main issues: isolation, accountability, and family/community involvement.

1. *Isolation*

The focus on isolation mirrors the concern of staff members about the continuing silos within the District. The actual reorganization, which was first announced on April 26, 2006, is based on the creation of multi-disciplinary teams geared to eliminate silos at the early learning/elementary level and at the secondary level. While in the past the District has been divided into discrete departments (education directors; special education; bilingual; and advanced learning, to name a few), the reorganization recognizes that all of these departments must work together in order to best provide services to our students. Therefore, for example, the early learning/elementary division and the secondary division will include instructional leaders in the grade span as well as partners from special education, bilingual, and advanced learning. This re-alignment is the first step towards eliminating silos, decreasing isolation, and increasing teamwork.

2. *Accountability*

Accountability, of course, is a key component to any successful system. It is important to stress here that accountability means more than just testing students and evaluating scores. It means a system where adults are accountable to each other, to students, and to communities, both vertically (my supervisor holds me accountable and I hold my staff members accountable), but also horizontally (my colleagues know that I will complete the tasks that I have been assigned, and that I will support them in their roles). And with family/community involvement, there is recognition that without the support of our families and communities, our schools will not be as strong as they can be, nor will our students receive all the services they deserve.

In terms of increasing the accountability of staff, the department will be focusing on what is typically called the “Instructional Council” model. This model is designed to implement a group process to address school failures as measured by student achievement. The group is made up of instructional leaders at the central level, along with principals and school-based instructional leaders, who conduct building walk-throughs to give on-going feedback on both instruction and school operations issues. These walk-throughs drive the workplan of the central staff and define the professional development priorities.

3. *Family and Community Involvement*

In order to increase the amount of family and community partnership with our schools, the reorganization will allow the District to be intentional and focused in our relationships with our families and communities. The District has done an extraordinary amount of work around the area of family and community partnerships, including a new School Board policy, the creation of a Family Partnership Steering Committee, the opening of a Family and Community Center in the JSCEE building, and the development of a set of recommendations. This work is valuable, but family and community involvement has been spread among departments, and has not had an overt academic focus. By combining all the family and community partnership activities under one department, we create the ability to support and work in partnership with our academic goals.

4. *Data-Based Decision Making*

An additional change within the reorganization is the realignment of resources to create an Education Technology division. This realignment of resources is based not only on student and school needs, but also on the Committee's Recommendation 6. That recommendation's four elements are key to the future success of the District. The educational technology division will allow the Learning and Teaching department to become truly data driven, and will include the Source (which is being fully implemented), as well as other research and assessment departments that have been spread throughout the organization. The new division is an integral part of the Learning and Teaching department, and will drive the creation of student assessments that are in line with our academic focus and curriculum, including the possibility of a kindergarten readiness assessment. Additionally, this office will work closely with teachers and administrators, students and families to increase access to essential family and school student data.

5. *Curriculum Enhancements*

The Superintendent's Committee worked on a recommendation about Curriculum Enhancements (Recommendation 8), which would, perhaps, be better named "Curriculum Alignment and Development". Regardless, the District agrees with this recommendation and its six elements, and has begun the work of system alignment with the currently-underway mathematics adoption. Additionally, the Learning and Teaching reorganization created the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Evaluation and the Office of Educational Technology. These two offices are partnered to continue development of resources and interventions that facilitate horizontal and vertical alignment of the District teaching materials.

It is clear that this recommendation will be on-going and will take a significant amount of time to fully implement. However, the implementation will be undertaken in an intentional manner that will implement elements based on a priority list.

School Closure

The School Board announced on January 25, 2006 that it was initiating a community-based process, through the appointment of a Community Advisory Committee, to determine how to best align facilities and programs to ensure educational excellence. The driving force behind this process is the urgent need to redirect funding to improve academics and create quality schools and programs in every neighborhood. This focus was echoed in Recommendation 14 of the Superintendent's Committee report, which noted that the District's excess capacity drains resources from schools and impairs the District's ability to direct resources towards academic improvements.

Subsequent to the announcement of the community-based process, the School Board spent significant time developing closure principles, criteria, and targets. These principles, criteria, and targets are intended to guide the Community Advisory Committee and

the community through the closure process, and to ensure that decisions on closure take the varied accomplishments of our schools into account.

The Superintendent’s Committee recommended closing between 1.0 million and 1.5 million square feet of space. Because districts are made up of discrete buildings, not just square footage, the School Board determined that an appropriate closure target would be eleven buildings in four quadrants: two buildings in the Northwest; and three each in the Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest. The quadrants are divided by I-5 and I-90. The School Board’s target of eleven buildings was based on an analysis of excess capacity that was undertaken through the lens of teaching stations.

The square footage targets set forth by the Committee were helpful, but when we began investigating our schools and developing targets, the Board determined that excess teaching stations would be a better target. This was based on a number of considerations. For example, over the years academic needs, and therefore building sizes, have changed—our newer buildings are significantly larger than our older buildings. This allows for a more collaborative educational environment, and also accommodates a variety of student needs. Additionally, schools now are more of a community resource, and now have larger gymnasium facilities to accommodate adult activities. These changes, along with others, result in significant square footage variations across the District. However, by looking at teaching stations as related to our actual enrollment, we could determine how many stations we needed to serve the students we have.

Subsequent to the creation of the guiding documents, the School Board appointed a 15-member Community Advisory Committee. The Committee is meeting weekly, and is scheduled to provide its recommendations to the Superintendent by the end of May. The process the Committee is using includes a total of ten community meetings. The first set of meetings is designed to garner community input on the School Board’s guiding documents, while the second set is designed to discuss specific school closure proposals.

Once the Committee delivers its recommendations to the Superintendent, the Superintendent will develop a “preliminary recommendation” on school closures for presentation to the School Board, as required by School District policy. Additional community meetings will be held, and the School Board is slated to vote on closures at the end of July.

V. Implementation of the Remaining Recommendations

At the same time that we are reorganizing departments and reducing excess capacity, a number of other recommendations either have been implemented or implementation is currently underway. A much smaller number have not been approached yet, as they are currently being evaluated. The following section outlines what has been done, what is being done, and what is being evaluated.

Completed Activities

1. Transportation (Recommendation 16):

In early March 2006, the School Board voted to begin a migration of high school students from yellow buses to Metro (public) transportation, starting with Ballard and Franklin High Schools. This project had been in the works for many months, and after negotiations with Metro and significant public input, it was determined that beginning with two schools would be the most appropriate action. Although the Superintendent's Committee recommended an immediate migration of all high school students to Metro, Metro did not have the capacity to serve all possible high school riders by the fall of 2006. Therefore, an immediate implementation would almost surely result in disruption of a student's school day because Metro would not be able to meet the students' needs. The staggered start allows the District and Metro to grow into this new relationship over time, and allows for adjustments in service to be made to best serve the students in the City.

2. *Funding a Six-Period Day in High Schools (Recommendation 10):*

In February 2006, the School Board voted to expend an additional \$2M during the 2006-07 year to ensure a full six-period day for all students. The School Board and staff had been evaluating this possibility for some time, and as the legislative session progressed it was clear that additional resources would be received that would make it possible to fund the six periods out of additional I-728 resources. This recommendation was part of the Committee's recommendation on high school rigor. The other pieces to that recommendation are being evaluated in light of the other changes that the District is undertaking in the Learning and Teaching department.

3. *Strategic Planning (Recommendation 2):*

The Committee's recommendation for rigorous strategic planning is a key element to the future success of the District. As the Committee stated, "Rigorous strategic planning will keep the organization focused on its mission and core goals." *Superintendent's Committee Report, page 13*. We agree with this recommendation and Superintendent Manhas has committed to the creation of a new, "strategic planning" position, to report directly to the Superintendent. The details of this position are being finalized, but we expect to seek a person who has significant experience with educational reform and cultural change. Rigorous strategic planning will shift the organization to a pro-active orientation to focus on mission and core goals

The District has also applied to the Broad Foundation for a Broad resident for the upcoming two years. The application was approved, and the resident, an individual with significant business and finance experience, is expected to begin in June 2006. The resident will be working with the District on planning, resource alignment, and managing change.

4. *Safety Net for Special Education (Recommendation 19):*

The state caps special education funding at 12.7% of a school district's student population. In a district like ours, with more students who require specialized services than the state funds, capturing any additional funds that might be available is imperative to our fiscal

success. The state offers a program called “safety net”, which is designed to reimburse districts for the costs of services that are beyond what the state generally funds.

For many years, the District either has not tried to receive safety net funding, or has been rejected in its applications. During the 2005-06 year a concerted effort was made to have well-written Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that would meet safety net standards. The District has received over \$200,000 in safety net funding so far this year, has applied for over \$1,000,000 in additional funding, and estimates receiving the majority of the additional funding requested.

Currently Underway

1. *Governance & Leadership Capacity (Recommendation 1):*

It is clear that the District is in need of increasing its leadership capacity at all levels. While some increased leadership will come naturally with the creation of a system that is truly accountable, leadership skills also must be developed. The new Chief Academic Officer has implemented a reorganization to empower the instructional leaders in our system to lead their colleagues to excellence. Additionally, roles and responsibilities throughout the system must be clarified in order to ensure that we are all working towards the same goal: academic success for all of our students.

Extensive training in leadership and management will be necessary for District leaders to be successful. We are currently working on a leadership training program for all central managers. Also, while there are some unique elements to a school district, high-quality management seminars can be found throughout the business community, and we look forward to partnering with the business community to learn these skills. Leaders need to be held accountable to overall District goals, and will be evaluated on their ability to assist in student and school success.

This is an on-going recommendation, as it involves training existing leaders and mentoring new ones.

2. *Budgeting (Recommendation 3):*

This recommendation included six elements. One, the review of the Weighted Student Formula, is currently underway. Changes to the WSF would be made, at the earliest, for the 2007-08 year, and the analysis of what changes should occur may vary depending on the result of school closure and program alignment.

The other budget recommendations are in alignment with the direction that we are taking in other areas, including a re-focusing of all of our efforts on academics. The changes being made in the Learning and Teaching department will require changes in all other

operational departments so that they are following the lead of, and supporting, the academic departments. Clearly aligning budget processes with academic priorities, in a fiscally responsible manner, is a key element to the success of the District.

This is an on-going recommendation. Changes are being discussed and planned now for the 2007-08 fiscal year, and during the 2006-07 year it is anticipated that many of these recommendations, or variations thereupon, will be implemented. It is also anticipated that many of the changes being undertaken on in the academic and operations divisions will result in efficiencies and savings, which can, in turn, inform our budget processes as well.

3. *Accountability (Recommendation 4):*

The changes being undertaken in the central office, including reorganizations and new standard operating procedures, are being done with a thoughtful eye towards accountability. Becoming a fully accountable system is not something that occurs overnight, and we recognize the many challenges we face when trying to change our culture in this way.

This recommendation contains four elements, each of which is required if Seattle Public Schools is to be a quality and effective system for our students and community. Initial steps in creating accountability have been started with the reorganization of the Learning and Teaching department, as well as corollary actions within the Operations department.

The work undertaken for this recommendation will be on-going; while we are currently in the ramp-up stage, creating and maintaining a system of true accountability takes concentration and effort. That effort, however, will pay off in increased satisfaction of our staff, students, families, and community members.

4. *Marketing (Recommendation 5):*

We accept that the District can improve its marketing activities, and many of the six elements to this recommendation can assist in that. One action already undertaken is the inclusion of all family and community partnership activities under the Learning and Teaching department; this will allow unified outreach to families and community members. Additionally, the Communications department has been increasing its marketing activities, using West Seattle as a pilot. In order to increase school visibility, for example, communications staff accompanied principals on school walk-throughs to advise on how best to market their programs.

The other recommendations, which include staffing changes and ways to incorporate help from media or business partners, are currently being evaluated. It is expected that over the next twelve months, as other changes are developed and incorporated, the remainder of these recommendations will be evaluated, potentially modified or deleted, and implemented.

5. *High School Rigor (Recommendation 10):*

As discussed above, in completed actions, the School Board voted to fund six periods of class per day for high schools for the 2006-07 year. The other elements to this recommendation are being evaluated in light of the other reforms that we are currently undergoing. It is important to remember, both with this recommendation and the next (Remedial Assistance) that in an urban district students' needs vary significantly. Although the District agrees with the recommended enhancements, the district wants ALL high school courses to challenge the students with a rigorous curriculum, whether those classes are advanced placement or high-needs special education. We want to leverage the definition of rigor defined as: "Rigor is the goal of helping students to develop the capacity to understand content that is complex, ambiguous, provocative, and personally or emotionally challenging." We also support the assertion, made by David Perkins, that "the most important decision we make is not how to teach, but what to teach. In fact, the decision to withhold rigor from some students is one of the most important reasons why schools fail".

Creating a rigorous high school program for all of our students will be an on-going effort, but one that must be undertaken in order that we can achieve our mission of ensuring that every student can graduate ready to lead a successful life.

6. *Remedial Assistance (Recommendation 11):*

Remedial assistance is an imperative for those students who appear to not be making standards, regardless of the reason why. Offering extra assistance to these students is a corollary to rigor—by offering extra help early, we will ensure that more students have the opportunities to compete in higher level classes. The School Board has already reviewed a plan to target \$4.3 million for remedial assistance in high schools, by allocating Learning Assistance Program funds, I-728 funds, and newly allocated state funds for WASL remediation to the high schools starting this summer and for next year to provide the schools the opportunity to offer additional (second dose) math and literacy classes and small group tutoring to students who are credit deficit and/or need skill development.

A partnership with community colleges and four-year institutions has been established and the District, and in conjunction with these partners and the City of Seattle, will be piloting a summer intervention program targeting high school students who did not meet standards.

Providing early intervention and assistance to students will also result in a reduction in the number of special education referrals that are based on inadequate teaching, as opposed to an actual disability. (See the discussion under the Special Education recommendation, below.)

While many of the remedial assistance recommendations are currently being implemented (or will be implemented during the 2006-07 year), providing such extra help is something that will be required every year, and is a service that must be frequently evaluated and modified based on student needs.

7. *Pre-Kindergarten and Full-Day Kindergarten (Recommendation 12):*

Significant work is already underway to ensure kindergarten readiness. The District's Kindergarten Transition office partners with the City and other early learning providers to ensure that families are aware of the District's kindergarten opportunities, and to assist early learning providers in aligning their work with our standards.

In the Learning and Teaching department's reorganization the role of early learning in the District was codified in the new "Early Learning/Elementary Education" division, and a leader for early learning has been identified. Additionally, the District has partnered with the City office for early learning and is currently working on a preschool policy and the development of a memorandum of understanding with the City as relates to early learning opportunities in Seattle's schools.

Early learning opportunities, whether provided by the District or by our City or community partners, are key elements to the success of all of our students. The role of early learning opportunities will continue to grow and expand as the District explores this area.

8. *Family Involvement & Community Partnerships (Recommendation 13):*

As discussed above, family and community partnerships have a leading role in the new Learning and Teaching reorganization. By finally bringing all family and community involvement employees under the same organization, we will be able to strengthen our outreach efforts. The District already has a School Board-adopted family partnership policy, and a steering committee made up of family and community members has developed a set of recommendations aimed at increasing the role of families and communities in schools. Those recommendations will be utilized as we move forward in this area.

9. *Real Estate Management (Recommendation 15):*

The District agrees with these recommendations, and is significantly on the way to implementation. Staff are currently revising the District's property management policies to place a higher priority on revenue generation. Additionally, a Property Management Advisory Committee has been convened, and an asset inventory has been started. The asset inventory will include schools that are closed pursuant to the District's current school closure process, and this will allow the District the flexibility to ensure that we are retaining, leasing, or selling property pursuant to our long-term goals. A longer term goal is the creation of a property management division, either within the District or by hiring an outside firm.

10. *Special Education (Recommendation 19):*

Providing special education services to our students is part of our goal to ensure that every student receives a quality education. Students who qualify for services have protections under federal and state law, and it is imperative that the actions that we take regarding this department not deny the students their right to receive an education.

It is also true, however, that the provision of special education services is a costly endeavor and that efficiencies can be found that increase the level of services provided. One efficiency that has already been created is the joining of special education staff into the early learning/ elementary education and the secondary education divisions of the reorganized Learning and Teaching department. By bringing staff together who cover all students—from special education to bilingual to advanced learning to general education—into the same division, we ensure that decisions are made jointly, and that efforts are not duplicated.

Many of the other recommendations are reasonable and fit within the District's current priorities. For example, ensuring that pre-referral interventions are made before a student is referred to special education is currently underway, and will be strengthened during the 2006-07 year. The District is interested in evaluating those IEPs that appear to have very few minutes to determine if the student is actually benefiting from special education services. Last, the discussion of re-centralizing special education staffing is currently underway, possibly for implementation during the 2007-08 year.

11. Bilingual Support (Recommendation 20):

The number of students who arrive here from other countries significantly enhances the quality and diversity of Seattle Public Schools. Determining the best model to serve these students is an important element not only to the success of the District, but also to the future success of these students, as they enter the workforce.

The six elements to this recommendation are currently being evaluated, in light of the need to provide quality instruction to all of our non-native English speakers. There is consensus that one of the priority next steps is to identify and evaluate the bilingual program model for academic success and fiscal efficiency.

Undergoing Evaluation

1. Teaching and Hiring Development (Recommendation 7):

The District, overall, agrees with the Committee's recommendations about hiring and professional development. Because of timelines, these changes could not be implemented for the 2006-07 hiring period; however, changes are imperative for the 2007-08 year. Initial steps (in the next six months) will include a partnership between the CAO and the Director of Human Resources to align common goals, objectives, and practices in hiring, and creating a multi-disciplinary teacher intervention team that is activated when it becomes clear that a teacher is in need of assistance.

Although not mentioned specifically, many of the actions contemplated by the District in changing its hiring and professional development practices will also assist in raising the level of accountability within the District.

2. *Transportation (Recommendation 16):*

As discussed above, the School Board has already voted to begin the migration of high school students from yellow buses to Metro. The other recommendation (“fee-for-T”) in its various permutations will be discussed in conjunction with other decisions, such as decisions about the student assignment plan.

3. *Centrally-Run Functions (Academic) (Recommendation 18):*

This recommendation relates directly to the Budget recommendation (number three), in that it calls for aligning the budget and priorities to our top academic priorities. The District agrees with this recommendation, and is in the process of implementing these ideas. This particular recommendation is on a 12-month timeframe, which will enable us to have completed reorganizations and restructuring prior to the 2007-08 budget timeframe.

4. *Centrally-Run Functions (Non-Academic) (Recommendation 17):*

Reducing central infrastructure, as long as the schools do not feel the impact, is an important part of any system restructuring. The recommendations are being evaluated in light of the other restructuring that is currently underway. With the next six months we anticipate that the central office will have a different structure in place that will lead to efficiencies.

5. *Targeted Class Size Reductions/Improved Student Teacher Ratios (Recommendation 9):*

While lower class sizes have, in many instances, proven effective at increasing students’ academic achievement, the District is not prepared, at this point, to implement this recommendation. Before determining if this is the appropriate action for the District, or is the appropriate class size goal, we must consider various factors, including the high fiscal implications (estimated at \$3.6 million in the first year and rising after that), as well as some of the other activities currently underway. For example, we believe school closures must be completed before we can evaluate, District-wide, class size scenarios.

6. *Alternative School Configurations (Recommendation 21):*

Alternative schools are an important part of the culture of Seattle Public Schools. Not only do they provide parents and family members with a variety of options for their students, the creation of many of these schools has come directly from families who were seeking alternatives for their children.

However, two elements to this recommendation may negatively impact our alternative schools. For example, our alternative schools, which took part in an alternative education community advisory committee during the spring of 2005, believe that the opportunity for families to choose the alternative school regardless of transportation needs, is integral to a diverse population. That is, if only certain students qualify for transportation to alternative schools, the diversity of students will be negatively impacted.

Additionally, while co-location can be helpful, in that a larger student body drives greater resources, the differences between traditional and alternative schools, from governance models to curriculum choices, there is a worry that co-location may result in a dilution of the “alternative-ness” of the alternative school.

The elements to this recommendation will be evaluated over the next twelve months, in light of other changes.

VI. Conclusion

We appreciate the time and effort that the Community Advisory Committee for Investing in Educational Excellence contributed to increasing the excellence of Seattle Public Schools. The recommendations made in the report, in conjunction with School Board action and Superintendent and leadership decisions will benefit our students, staff, and community partners for years to come. The work we have started will not be easy, but it is important. We would like to thank not only this Committee, but the many hundreds of community members who assist us on a daily basis—by sitting on committees, by volunteering in schools, and by jumping in to help when they see a need.

We recognize that there are many “next steps” that must be developed and completed as we work towards becoming a high quality, accountable school district. For example, policy changes must be completed, plans must be aligned, academic priorities must be identified, and a culture of change must be established and fostered. However, with the actions that we have taken over the past few months, we are on the path to change.

A school district is only as strong as the people who work and volunteer in the district. Knowing that, we believe that we can be the strongest district in the nation if we all focus on the same point: educating our students. We look forward to continuing our conversation with the community on how we can make Seattle Public Schools stronger for all our students, staff, and community members.

Attachment A – Spreadsheet Showing Status of Each Recommendation

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>DISCUSSION/STATUS</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>TIMEFRAME</u>
Governance & Leadership Capacity	Relates to the Superintendent, School Board, Senior Leadership, and Principals. Actions are underway, beginning with a re-focusing on students and academics.	Superintendent	Six months for initial implementation; on-going for commitment to change.
Strategic Planning	Relates to creation of focus, use of data to direct decisions, creation of accountability.	Superintendent	Six months for initial implementation; on-going for commitment to change.
Budgeting	Relates to developing a budget aligned with academic priorities.	Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer/Chief Academic Officer/Director of Finance	Twelve months; time will be spend developing priorities, reorganizing, and changing budget processes.
Accountability	Relates to the need to ensure employees know their role in the District; increases assessments of students, schools, and staff; eliminates inefficiencies.	Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer/ Chief Operating Officer	Initial implementation three months (chain of command and earned autonomy); twelve months for assessments and re-focusing of central office; on-going for continuous improvement.

Attachment A – Spreadsheet Showing Status of Each Recommendation (*cont'd*)

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>DISCUSSION/STATUS</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>TIMEFRAME</u>
Marketing	Relates to increasing public outreach, supporting school-based marketing.	Chief Operating Officer/Director of Communications	Underway for assisting schools in marketing; underway (with Learning and Teaching reorganization) in increasing public outreach. Under evaluation for new staffing and investing in paid media.
Data-Based Decision Making	Relates to the need to make decisions based on student needs; increasing accountability of staff by making data more accessible.	Chief Academic Officer/Education Technology Division	Underway with the creation of the Education Technology division. Twelve months to full implementation.
Teaching and Hiring Development	Relates to hiring, retaining, and training teachers.	Chief Operating Officer/Chief Academic Officer/Director of Human Resources	Twelve to eighteen months for full implementation; ongoing for training and development points.
Curriculum Enhancements	Relates to aligning curriculum and increasing access to science and music.	Chief Academic Officer/Curriculum, Evaluation, Instruction and Assessment division	Underway with math adoption; other elements under evaluation.

Attachment A – Spreadsheet Showing Status of Each Recommendation (*cont'd*)

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>DISCUSSION/STATUS</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>TIMEFRAME</u>
Targeted Class Size Reductions/Improved Student Teacher Ratios	Reduces class size in grades K-3.	Chief Academic Officer	Under evaluation.
High School Rigor	Relates to increasing the relevant rigorous courses students are offered; increases graduation requirements; relates to funding.	Chief Academic Officer/Secondary Education division	Underway with funding of 6-period day and examination of high school funding formula; under evaluation for increasing graduation requirements.
Remedial Assistance	Relates to early intervention for students not making standards.	Chief Academic Officer/Secondary Education division	Underway with WASL remediation and funding of "double dose" math; other recommendations are under evaluation.
Pre-Kindergarten & Full-Day Kindergarten	Relates to reaching out to early learning providers; kindergarten readiness assessment; creation of additional pre-K programs.	Chief Academic Officer/Early Learning & Elementary Division	An early learning coordinator position has been filled; District and City are working together on early learning programs; kindergarten readiness assessment is being piloted and will be evaluated.

Attachment A – Spreadsheet Showing Status of Each Recommendation (*cont'd*)

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>DISCUSSION/STATUS</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>TIMEFRAME</u>
Family Involvement & Community Partnerships	Relates to developing and coordinating relationships with families and community partners.	Chief Academic Officer/Family and Community Involvement division	Underway, with the creation of the Family and Community Involvement division in the Learning and Teaching department.
Facilities	Relates to reducing excess capacity.	Chief Operating Officer/Chief Academic Officer	Underway, with the current school closing process. Expected completion in July, 2006.
Real Estate Management	Relates to a more fiscally-conscious property management program.	Chief Operating Officer/Director of Facilities	Underway, with the development of new policies and the creation of a property management advisory committee. Expected completion by September 2006. Development of a property management division is on a twelve-month timeframe.
Transportation	Relates to moving high school students to Metro and reducing transportation costs overall.	Chief Operating Officer/Director of Transportation	Migration to Metro underway, full implementation expected by Fall 2008. Evaluation of fee for transportation or reduction in availability is currently underway.

Attachment A – Spreadsheet Showing Status of Each Recommendation (*cont'd*)

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>DISCUSSION/STATUS</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>TIMEFRAME</u>
Centrally-Run Functions (Non-Academic)	Relates to reducing central costs by examining service models or outsourcing services.	Chief Operating Officer/Chief Academic Officer	Evaluating central office functions is underway. Evaluation of potential outsourcing possibilities has not begun.
Centrally-Run Functions (Academic)	Relates to ensuring all central functions are driven primarily by student needs and academic priorities.	Chief Operating Officer/Chief Academic Officer	Alignment of central office functions to student needs and academic priorities is underway; full implementation expected in twelve months. On-going work will be needed to sustain commitment.
Special Education	Relates to eliminating disproportionality in special education and aligning expenditures (both central and school-based) to actual need and service model.	Chief Academic Officer	The Learning and Teaching department is undergoing a full evaluation of special education services, including an evaluation of entrance and exit requirements. Full implementation is expected in twelve months.

Attachment A – Spreadsheet Showing Status of Each Recommendation (*cont'd*)

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>DISCUSSION/STATUS</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>TIMEFRAME</u>
Bilingual Support	Relates to service models that most appropriately serve bilingual students and increase efficiency.	Chief Academic Officer	Evaluation of the bilingual department, including service models, is currently underway. Evaluation should be completed in twelve months, with implementation of results beginning in approximately nine months.
Alternative School Configurations	Relates to increasing efficiencies of alternative programs.	Chief Academic Officer	Evaluation of this recommendation has not yet begun.