

Board Special Meeting

Work Session: Budget; Advanced Learning

Wednesday, November 28, 2018, 4:30 – 7:30pm

Board Office Conference Room, John Stanford Center

2445 – 3rd Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134



Minutes

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 4:30pm. Directors Pinkham, Mack, Harris, Patu, Geary and Burke were present. This meeting was staffed by Chief Financial Officer JoLynn Berge.

Work Session: Budget

Chief Financial Officer JoLynn Berge summarized the agenda and reviewed the outcomes. Ms. Berge spoke about the 2019-20 budget development calendar. She explained what to expect in the next few budget work sessions and the budget adoption scheduled for July 10, 2018. She explained on December 12th the Directors will receive the Superintendent recommendations. She reviewed the budget outlook for 2018-19 through 2021-22.

Director Mack asked for clarification on projections. Ms. Berge explained it is based on enrollment on what it would take to run the 2018-19 year. It does include what was bargained and the assumptions are included at the top. She spoke about additional gaps that still remain, as enrollments grow so do the gaps.

Director Mack asked if more grant opportunities are available to fill the gaps. Ms. Berge explained not enough grants will cover the \$78M shortfall.

Ms. Berge spoke about the planned savings and how the starting point for cuts is estimated at \$42.7M. She explained how staff vacancies did help with some of the deficit. As your expenditures grow your vacancies grow with them, as well as when you hire more staff. Ms. Berge summarized the additional items being used to help with the deficit.

Director Harris asked why was the estimated underspend was so incorrect in 2001. Deputy Superintendent Stephen Nielsen explained in 2001-2002 the underspend that was anticipated did not materialize. He added systems are much better at estimating the amounts. Ms. Berge explained the \$5M estimate is lower than what is typically underspent.

Director Burke asked whether there is a different way we can structure our finances to bring in more money. Mr. Nielsen explained even if our student population were to grow we would still have a deficit, because the legislature still isn't paying for full student costs.

Ms. Berge summarized the total dollars available for possible consideration.

Director Harris asked whether the BEX Oversight Committee has seen the consideration of moving \$3M to capital. Ms. Berge explained that it has not and gave additional information of

how it would not impact any planned projects. Ms. Berge spoke about how all departments need to come together and solve the deficit.

Mr. Nielsen explained part of the reason why start time is included in the considerations is due to the bus driver shortage. Ms. Berge added the district is looking at the best way to get students to school sporting events that would still be cost effective.

Director Pinkham asked if there was an increase to have three start times. Ms. Berge explained there was an increase due to the bell time switch and two start times with the one year only grant from the City of Seattle and noted it could be a cost savings, which is why it is on the possible consideration list.

Director Mack asked about real savings. Ms. Berge explained it is the projected savings.

Director Harris asked about having younger students on metro buses. Mr. Nielsen explained if we continue to have a driver shortage this will help with that situation. Directors added additional concerns with middle school students being on metro buses.

Ms. Berge explained \$10.3M will need to be from the list on slide 9 for consideration.

Director Burke asked how much will be one-time cuts and how much would be sustainable cuts. Ms. Berge explained if the legislature does not come through with additional funding, the levy has to be the back stop. The levy that is being presented is for more than we can legally collect, and a possible levy law might need to be changed.

Ms. Berge spoke about the Weighted Staffing Standard (WSS) Committee and suggested potential reductions. She explained all the items on the list are not required by contract. She explained how the WSS Committee does use the equity lens while looking at allocations.

Director Research & Evaluation Eric Anderson spoke about producing the equity tiering for the third year in a row. He explained what factors are being used while looking at opportunity gaps. Mr. Anderson spoke about the proposed updates to the equity tiering. Historically underserved students of color and possibly adding a subgroup to include multiracial and more Asian subcategories. He reviewed the seven federal groups that were considered while looking at the tiering system.

Director Harris asked about tiering funds for schools where the students are on the underrepresented list. Ms. Berge explained the equity funds that are based on Free and Reduced Lunch. WSS has this on the list, but it is not something they would like to see cut, because they do see the value in those funds.

Director Geary asked if the district recommendations are being vetted before the cuts go into effect. Ms. Berge explained the process used while discussing potential items. She confirmed special education dollars are not being touched as well as with English Language Learners dollars. Dollars that are mandated are not moving. Only items that we can possibly move are up for discussion.

Director Mack asked if the dollars can follow the student and not the school. Mr. Anderson spoke about creating a model that is based on the students, currently we base it on school. Ms. Berge explained it can be found in the big sheet.

Director Harris asked if legal can be brought in for risk analysis. Ms. Berge will speak with General Counsel.

Ms. Berge spoke about outreach to the community that is ongoing and upcoming community meetings.

The meeting recessed at 5:49 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 6:03 p.m.

Work Session: Advanced Learning

Call to order: Director Burke called the work session to order at 6:03pm. Also in attendance were Directors Pinkham, Geary, Mack, Patu, and Harris. Staff in attendance were Superintendent Juneau; Kari Hanson, Director of Student Support Services; and Wyeth Jessee, Chief of Student Support Services.

Work Session: Advanced Learning

Mr. Jessee started off the presentation. Mr. Jessee introduced himself and Kari Hanson, Director of Student Support Services. Mr. Jessee discussed some of the ways that the Advanced Learning department has been engaging with families, that there has been some reorganizing of the department and that how the services and supports are being provided to schools has been changing. Mr. Jessee talked about the work that the department is starting to do to set up things for a long-term work shift that will start to address the inequities that have been in the district for a long time.

Director Burke wanted feedback from the other directors to ensure that the directors were okay with the current drivers and asked for comments from the directors to ensure that there was a common launch point.

- Director Mack thought that all three items were important and wondered what the scope and sequence for classes is. There used to be more of a definition of what HCC/APP meant.
- Director Patu wondered what having “barrier free”, “equitable access” actually means. How do we explain to students what that means?
- Director Harris stated that this topic has caused more consternation and frustration in the district. She feels that there is more polarity surrounding the HCC program. She also feels that there is not professional development for accelerated, gifted, advanced learners. As a district we do not address the needs of twice exceptional students. She heard from several advanced learning parents that they were upset that there was not an individual Listen and Learn night. With this Task Force she wants to make sure that we have a common understanding, work plan and goals that are respectful to everyone, and will fix the systemic failures. That we need to improve communication and own the issue. Director Pinkham was wondering if the current drivers are things that we need to address, and/or are the issues that need to be answered.

After hearing this feedback, Ms. Hanson responded that the current drivers look at the current problems of practice that needs to drive the work forward. What actions Advanced Learning needs to take. Mr. Jessee said that we are going to be engaging with families to go more in depth with them; owning the issues – that there are systemic failures that we have heard loud and clear. The need to open up the conversation to communicate about where we are and where we want to get.

Director Geary reminded the group of being mindful – so much of the conversation has talked about the identification of the student, and that there needs to be a cultural shift around students who need more and giving them what they need, not just accelerating them along.

Moving from the current drivers of Advanced Learning, Mr. Jessee talked about the Advanced Learning Task Force (ALTF). The task force, which is comprised of parents, staff, and a student, reflective of the diversity within Seattle, have been spending a large amount of time going deep around a complex set of issues in order to have an understanding of what the systemic failures are and how to untangle those while also looking at everything from an equity lens. A couple of areas that they have looked at so far has slowed the progress a little more than previously planned, but also understand the importance of the work. The ALTF have gone in depth going over the related policies and the program review from Research Evaluation and Assessment (REA). The next key points are to have a more defined mission/vision, and what services for the advanced learner looks like. In the spring, they will be moving on to Highly Capable status and what that means.

Ms. Hanson had the directors look at some of the examples of what the task force has come up with to this point for the Mission/Vision for the task force group. Ms. Hanson and Mr. Jessee wanted to get some feedback from the Board to bring back to the task force meeting in December. Director Burke asked if the other directors had any feedback.

- Director Patu wanted clarity on what equitable learning opportunities means – for programs or students?
- Director Mack did not feel that these statements talked about the “what.” She understands that advanced learning is a multi-faceted issue, but acceleration is insufficient and limiting.
- Director Harris had concerns about differentiation; noted that sometimes cohorts are based in schools where leadership is not engaged or supportive and problems arise from that.
- Director Pinkham wondered about the wording of the third statement example; do we currently do that?
- Director Geary said that it is the Board’s responsibility to ensure that the adults are not fighting the identification of students, and that there needs to be a social and cultural shift.
- Superintendent Juneau felt that the statements were all missing the what and the why; why is it important for all kids? They are missing the heart of why it is important.
- Director Burke felt that the statements put the equity piece before stating what we are providing. Liked the idea of the why and the heart.

- Superintendent Juneau felt that we need to specifically call out how we have advanced racial equity and the need to make Advanced Learning available to all students, especially the historically underserved.
- Mr. Jessee summarized that this is just the initial work that has been done by people who have committed their time to this work. He knows that finding the right words can be tricky. He thanked the Board for the feedback.
- Director Harris wants to make sure that the accountability and a way to evaluate progress is really important.

After the feedback for the mission/vision statements, Mr. Jessee reviewed what topics the ALTF has covered in their meetings. Racial equity is a highly visible part of every meeting and understanding bias and racial equity has been a great part of the work. The task force realizes that there are not equitable services at all schools for students. Director Pinkham wanted to make sure that the marginalized populations were discussed as part of the issue about racial equity.

In the next part of the presentation, Mr. Jessee talked about the Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and how that has been AL's binding document; not just words on paper, but paper to action. The directors had some concerns around consistency and the accountability for schools. Wanted to make sure that we do not fall back into just having words on paper with no accountability. Mr. Jessee agreed that there needs to be alignment with the CSIPs.

High School Highly Capable Pathways – Central Office is working with the three high school HC pathway principals to make sure that there are consistent baseline courses and sequence. The hope is to have the baseline courses set in time for open enrollment.

The final slides of the presentation were about the AL department itself, and Ms. Hanson talked about the work that the department is doing for all schools. They are now able to look at growth data and work to provide support to all schools. Director Mack voiced concerns about the delay of the process for identifying advanced learners; that we need to make identification ongoing and accessible and that the delay needs to change. Ms. Hanson discussed how being able to look at the data, with MTSS in schools, the schools will be able to provide more support to students whether they are identified or not identified as an advanced learner. She said that services for students will not have to wait a year to get support, but to move to a cohort school it is a year delay.

This year was the first year that students testing for eligibility were able to have it with interpretation in their home language. Another change has been to initiate more 'pushed' communication to families so that the district is trying to inform parents via robocalls, Twitter, and Schoology to encourage parents to go to the Advanced Learning website if they would like more information. To end the meeting, Director Harris gave a big thank you to the team, and how much she appreciates the work that they have been doing. She would like to make sure that this task force will not be the same as past task forces. In response, Mr. Jessee acknowledged that Advanced Learning is aware of the work, problems, and issues that exist. The department is working to make improvements, but there is not an immediate solution.

Superintendent Juneau ended the meeting by acknowledging that advanced learning is one of the biggest issues that we need to tackle, and that these are hard conversations. Although there was not a specific Listen and Learn meeting for advanced learners, there was community

representation of advanced learning at every meeting She is hopeful that while there will be more hard conversations to come, that people are ready for high quality learning not matter what; that we are going to serve students.

Adjourn

This meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm