

**Friday Memo**  
**September 16, 2016**  
**This memo includes 25 attachments**

Dear Board members,

**Board Retreat:** Thank you to the Board and cabinet as well as district and community leaders for dedicating time to the all-day retreat on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Effective boards establish long term goals (four goals; four years; student achievement). Our Board has kept the focus on three goals (Excellence; Equity and Engagement) for three years. That has enabled us to deepen the work across the district. The best recent example is our work on Eliminating Gaps through relationships. For the first time in over a decade, all educators across the district participated in a professional development day before school began. The day was designed by district leaders, Seattle Education Association (SEA) and Principals' Association of Seattle Schools (PASS) and focused on Relationships. This theme is now reflected district-wide in many creative ways. Kudos to the Board for helping us keep this focus district-wide. At our retreat we did the following:

- **Budget** – Until McCleary is resolved, our SPS budget is unsustainable. In order to pay market rate salaries (for basic education, special education and ELL) we have little less each year for everything else. Our review of the budget says:
  - Most of our levy goes for salaries, special education and ELL
  - We spend about the same level for teaching as do other districts
  - A bit more for nurses and security
  - A bit less for counselors and librarians, and
  - We make more promises than other districts – for enhancements: Montessori, Dual Language, K-8, etc.
- **District Focus SMART Goals** – Nearly final goals that drive our work district-wide were reviewed by the board:
  - Goal 1 – Excellence in Learning – Multi-Tiered Support System for academics and social emotional (whole child approach)
  - Goal 2 – Eliminating the Opportunity Gap for students of color; especially African American male students
  - Goal 3 – Program Mapping to make a first cut at location, cost, scope and impact
  - Goal 4 – Budget / Funding – Clarify WSS and plan for impact of McCleary/Budget Cliff
  - Goal 5 – Engagement and Collaboration – Earlier engagement of community/staff, transparency and improved decision-making
- **Eliminating Opportunity Gaps (EOG)** – Greater Depth on Goal 2 – This is THE issue of our time. SPS is doing ‘on average’ much better than our peers, however we have a huge opportunity gap; and a growing number of ‘beat the odds’ schools. Olympic Hills Elementary has the highest achievement for African American students and the highest African American student response to the question: Somebody at school cares about me. The focus for our EOG work is:
  - Positive Learning
  - Positive Relationships

- Positive Beliefs
- Positive Partnerships

**One Time Funds** – The Board continued their review of one time funds:

- \$1.9 M for compliance
- \$2.3 M for added mitigation
- 0.75 M for IB at Rainier Beach, Ingraham and Chief Sealth
- \$4 M for SMART goals (\$2M earlier; \$2M on Saturday)
- \$2 M to start a Middle School Math Adoption

**School Visits – and Relationships:**

- **Madrona:** Senator Patty Murray visited Madrona K-8 one week ago. She visited three classrooms, responded to student questions (7<sup>th</sup> grade) and read to first and second grade students. Madrona’s work on relationships was reflected in classrooms and hallways. RULER “mood meter” posters were visible and posted questions about “how are you feeling?”
- **Ballard High School** began their year, as they have in the past, with “Stars” posted for each of their 1800 students throughout the building. Students find their star and post it on their locker. What a great way to help students “find” and “see” themselves as part of the school. They have also added an activity period devoted to teaching student study skills. The September focus is on use of planners to manage their time.
- **West Woodland Elementary** has a long history of work on relationships, starting with social emotional learning. This year they are using their data to identify individual student needs with a case management approach to meeting those needs. And, thanks to great parent/volunteer relationships, they are providing 21 extended day opportunities for students to bridge the change in dismissal times.

**City Partnerships:**

- **Seattle Center Visioning:** The Seattle Center pulled together 110 community leaders last week to re-envision the NE quadrant of Seattle Center. Seattle Center, including the globally recognized Space Needle, is now 60 years old. What do we envision for the future? Mayor Ed Murray and the Seattle Schools had an opportunity to present dreams and needs (SPS attached). Table groups worked through the morning to identify the vision: more open space; more parking; more inviting 24/7. And during the afternoon started to sketch out alternative designs. The areas most discussed included the City parking garage, the KCTS (NE) corner and the School District needs (stadium, parking, and high school). Lots of energy for moving forward. And lots of competing ideas for limited space.
- **City Summit** on Eliminating Opportunity Gaps: The Advisory Group appointed by the Mayor is moving toward final recommendations. At the last meeting, the Advisory Group made one final review of the draft recommendations. Over the next few weeks, the Advisory Group will be asked to prioritize those recommendations. See attached for preliminary recommendations; See City Summit web site for the latest update. Concurrently, the Mayor is recommending some initial funding in his budget for 2017.

- **Seattle Housing Authority/Seattle Public Schools Partnership:** On Wednesday the Mayor announced our partnership with SHA to stabilize housing for families at Bailey-Gatzert. The City is investing \$200,000 in the pilot. Families at Bailey Gatzert Elementary School who are homeless or lack stable housing will be the first to get assistance this year from a new effort aimed at increasing academic success for students by providing them a reliable place to live. The Home from School pilot program and partnership of Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle Public Schools, will start with families at Bailey Gatzert and could expand to other schools if successful. The families in the pilot program will get help with finding housing, getting leases and moving.

### **School Opening:**

- **Incredible Lift:** This is quite possibly the greatest year of change in Seattle for some time. All transportation routes were changed to accommodate the later bell times for high schools; Five new Elementary/K-8 schools were opened; 90 new classrooms were “invented” to accommodate smaller class sizes; we went to All Day Kindergarten district-wide for the first time. That represents incredible work by teachers, principals, transportation, facilities, warehouse, custodians, laborers, capital projects, technology and many, many more. THANK YOU! All that considered, the transition has been smoother than anticipated – with many still working hard to tie up loose ends.
- **Enrollment Growth:** Our budget is based on an increase of about 800 students. Our first official count day in September (an approximation of our annual enrollment) is up about 1000 students. We are running hard to finalize the enrollment numbers for each school and adjust staffing. Our goal is to get that done in the next two weeks. The Board did set aside \$2M to help minimize the impact of individual schools under enrollment. Based on our enrollment, we will be adding staff at a number of schools.
- **Staffing:** Due to the legislature’s funding of smaller class sizes at primary grades (K-3) we will see a dramatic shift in staffing this year. By law (or at least by budget) primary grades MUST have much smaller classes (20-24) than intermediate grades. IF we fail to use the funds from the legislature in the way intended, the state will take those funds back. That probably means more split classes in order to meet the state funding requirements. See the attached letter from the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Michael Tolley.

### **Coming Up:** There are MANY critical issues coming before the Board in the next few weeks:

- Options for **20 minutes** of more instructional time for our students and the associated longer school day for the 2017-18 school year. This was bargained one year ago and will be implemented one year from now. This increase will bring instructional time in Seattle closer to the state average and provide more time for meeting the new state graduation requirements. Community and staff will be surveyed regarding adding 20 minutes at the: a) start; b) end; c) a little of both.
- **Late arrival / Early dismissal** options for the 2017-18 school year. Also scheduled for next year is a more consistent Late arrival (LA) or Early dismissal (ED) schedule. Currently, those schedules vary by length and by school. The goal is one consistent format – with a one-hour LA or ED per week. This format will provide

consistent professional development time for teachers to work together on gap eliminating strategies.

- **Community Engagement:** Both the addition of 20 minutes and late arrival/early dismissal were brought to the board during the September 14 Board Work Session. The board was provided with an overview of how the decisions relate to the following: our strategic plan, our data and eliminating gaps, compliance and the potential opportunities. Both of these decisions were bargained in our last negotiation with SEA. The staff also presented their recommended level of community engagement based on an analysis using the Community Engagement Model. The staff and board concluded that Tier 2, Consult/Involve was the right level. The communication team will work with Michael Tolley and staff to design the engagement plan. The final school schedule will inform the transportation standards for next year (see below).
- **Boundary revisions** needed to accommodate our new schools (6 elementary and 2 middle schools) and our growth: Some of these boundaries are simply reviews of earlier Board decisions that anticipated the opening of new schools. Some are tweaks based on changing enrollment patterns. Due to our continued growth and smaller class sizes, we would not be able to grandfather students for the 2017-18 school year. See the attached document for Growth Boundaries Key Points.
- **Cascadia / Highly Capable Cohorts (HCC) feeder pattern:** Our Lincoln based HCC students (770) already outnumber the seats at the new Cascadia (660). We will be reviewing options and a decision on an additional site to accommodate all of the students at Cascadia will be made prior to Open Enrollment, which begins in mid-February 2017.
- **Transportation standards:** Our private vendor transportation contract is ending this year and needs to be rebid. All of the above (20 minutes, Late Arrival/Early Dismissal, and HCC feeder pattern) need to be considered in those bid standards. The Board asked us to see whether we could push back that bid date without damaging the bid process.
- **24 Credits** (policy decisions): September 28<sup>th</sup> Board Work Session. Seattle was granted a two-year extension on implementing the 24 credit graduation requirements. Incoming Freshmen (2017) must meet the new 24 credit requirement (which also applies to specific subject area requirements). The Board will be asked to address the policy level questions of policy so that we can provide information for the 2017-18 student registration packets that we print in January.

#### **Listening Opportunities:**

- September 19, 6-8 p.m., Community Engagement Task force. This is a public meeting and will be held at the Sandpoint Elementary Library.

#### **EOG – Eliminating Opportunity Gaps:**

- **Our Challenge:** Our district strategic plan focuses on three goal areas: Excellence and Equity; Effective Systems; and Community Engagement. The strategic plan made two significant changes: a) moving from ALL to EVERY – signifying that each and every student matters; b) moving from Excellence (alone) to Excellence AND Equity. Our data show three things:
  - Positive district-wide trend where we outperform similar districts statewide

- Large opportunity gaps especially for African American and students of color
- A dozen Seattle Schools that outperform the state in closing gaps
- **Our Focus:** Recognizing that we still have important work to do, the district worked with our school leaders to review research. The plan to eliminate opportunity gaps includes four areas:
  - Positive Learning – continue to do the things that have been working for many of our students: Use data to inform teams of teachers about strengths and needs that that can be addressed in classrooms/interventions.
  - Positive Relationships – this is our new work; recognizing that students will do better if they have a caring adult advocate that will encourage and support their learning. Our district-wide professional development – jointly planned with SEA, PASS and district leaders - encouraged each school to set a climate goal and establish check and connect opportunities for our neediest students.
  - Positive Beliefs – one year ago the Board adopted a moratorium on elementary, non-violent, suspensions. AND they funded additional school supports for social emotional learning (RULER, PBIS) AND hired a team of intervention specialists that could help with emergencies and helps schools create positive alternatives to suspensions. District-wide we saw an 8% reduction in out of school suspensions.
  - Positive Partnerships – Seattle Schools are blessed with many, many (over 300) community based organization partners. We continue to work with them to help us support students in eliminating gaps. We also very much appreciate the positive partnerships that we have with SEA, PASS and our labor leaders. Their work on the professional development and the Race and Equity Teams is essential in moving us forward.
- **John Muir Elementary**
  - Along with virtually every school in Seattle John Muir has set ambitious goals around eliminating opportunity gaps for their students – half of which are African American. They have set school climate goals, committed to advocate for their neediest students, and made plans to show visible support to their students. In doing so, they are taking a page from South Shore K-8, West Seattle Elementary and Leschi Elementary which have held previous events. This effort – called Black Men Uniting to Change the Narrative– includes broad community support – especially from community leaders of color – to high five students as they come to school. At each school that has done a similar event, we have seen students who might come to school with heads bent, respond positively to high fives and verbal encouragement.
  - The student celebration was cancelled last night due to a security threat. The threat was posted on a website and our safety and security department had no other choice but to cancel the student celebration. This morning at 6:45 a.m. the full school and grounds were swept and families were informed that school would be in session. In the meantime, many of our community members showed up at the school. Because the school was safe and secure for students and families, the African American men in attendance chose to proceed with a smaller but still

inspirational and affirming welcome to the school day. It was clear that our community stands united with John Muir in eliminating opportunity gaps and accelerating learning for all students. During the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade student assembly four of these community leaders share their love, hopes and belief in our students. One leader asked the students to remind the adults, “it is not about you”, “it is about me”. Once again a powerful example of our community coming together, against all odds to demonstrate their support and solidarity with John Muir staff and in support of students.

- Finally, the day at John Muir ended with some central office staff going back to the school to share their thanks and gratitude for the staff. Thank you to our board members who took the time to our go out as well: Director Blanford, Director Geary and Director Pinkham. I know it meant a lot the principal and staff to have you recognize the work they are leading.

### **In the Media:**

As we inch towards November and as our schools fully commit to what it will take to close opportunity gaps, we might see an increase in external pressure or protest.

- **John Muir:** T-shirts were designed by teachers to show their support for each and every one of their students. The t-shirt read, Black Lives Matter: We stand together. The teachers were not promoting any agenda other than making a positive difference in the life of Each and Every student. Black Lives Matter began as a hash tag and has no single source agenda; many use the slogan for various purposes. Seattle Schools is not endorsing or teaching any outside political agenda. And, yes, Seattle Schools does have a policy regarding free speech for students and for staff and commitment to eliminating opportunity gaps with a specific focus on African American male. Courts have ruled over the past 50 years that free speech is limited only for obscenity, hate and violence.
- **Taking a Knee at Sporting Events:** We have heard that students may begin taking a knee at sport events. Media will most likely be covering this. Today we sent guidance to coaches and Athletic Directors.
- **Rainier Beach High School** was one of 20 schools from across the country to be named a “School of Opportunity” by the National Education Policy Center.

Larry

**Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Update:** Attached please find Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Michael Tolley’s update for this week.

**Associate Superintendent for Facilities & Operations Update:** Attached please find Associate Superintendent for Facilities & Operations Flip Herndon’s update for this week.

**Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Update:** Attached please find Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Clover Codd’s update for this week.

**Assistant Superintendent for Operations Update:** Attached please find Assistant Superintendent for Operations Pegi McEvoy's update for this week.

**Chief Engagement Officer Update:** Attached please find Chief Engagement Officer Carri Campbell's update for this week.

**Non-Substantive Board Policies Edits Annual Report:** Per Policy No. 1310, an annual report on the Board Policies that have received non-substantive edits in the last year is attached to this email, and covers September 2015 through August 2016. Please let Theresa Hale know if you have any questions.

**Updated Superintendent Procedures Annual Report:** Per Policy No. 1310, an annual report on the Superintendent Procedures that were created or updated in the last year is attached to this email, and covers September 2015 through August 2016. Please let Theresa Hale know if you have any questions.