

Friday Memo

September 2, 2016

This memo includes 8 attachments

Dear Board members,

LOTS of last minute work underway as we rush toward the start of the school year. Thank you to 100s and 1000s of employees working to have a great start for kids: announcements to parents, bus routes, freshly waxed floors, teachers prepping their rooms, nutrition services and the warehouse stocking food supplies. AND, as I have mentioned before – about 250 classrooms – opening in new locations across the district due to either new construction, enrollment growth or smaller class sizes. That is a LOT of moving boxes, computer hook ups, desks, chairs, supplies – all finding their way to right spot at the right time. And LOTS of last minute work by teachers and support staff over the next few hours before school starts!

Ribbon Cuttings: Three “new school” ribbon cuttings this week – two more next week. Thank you to board members, legislators, principals, facilities, PTSA, and Schools First for being there to tell the great, great story about Seattle Schools:

- We are growing as more families move to Seattle – up 8000 students in eight years
- Great support from our voters in voting for new and remodeled schools
- Great support from legislators for class size and help in creating new classrooms
- New schools that support students in incredible ways:
 - o Thornton Creek with provisions for project based / discovery learning
 - o Hazel Wolf with a giant living plant wall and many environmental spaces
 - o World School with partnership spaces for families, health and community partners

City of Seattle: Lots of partnership with the City of Seattle:

- The Summit: is starting to zero in on some potential recommendations for reducing opportunity gap
- MOU with Seattle Parks: Dr. Herndon has been negotiating with Seattle Parks and Rec over the past six months regarding joint use of after school spaces – and the changes due to our new bell times. We now have a tentative agreement and will do a two month letter of agreement while we bring those changes through the board approval process.
- Schmitz Park: We also have an agreement with Parks and Rec in regard to the day care lease at Schmitz Park. SPS is reading the district policies carefully to make the space as affordable as possible while still meeting policy requirements. That ended up being more than Parks and Rec could cover. Since our costs are fixed, it seems that additional enrollments and/or higher fees can help bridge that gap.

- Seattle Center: For some time the City of Seattle has been working with the owners/tenants at Seattle Center to bring together a visioning group to see about creating a new, and shared, vision for that location. Since Memorial Stadium and parking along with our Center School lease at the Armory are major stakeholders, we will be a part of those discussions. Director Patu and Director Peters have been invited to join that discussion as well.

Task Forces: Four pieces of new news from our task forces:

- Assessment Calendar: as part of our agreement with SEA, we agreed to work together on an annual assessment calendar. Attached.
- Dual Language provided a report that says the we are partially built out for 10 dual language schools with a vision (promise?) of ten more which is four schools (two elem, one middle, one high) per region. They are recommending a HS for the SE (to complete that pathway); an elementary for the SW to complete that pathway; and other recommendations.
- Cascadia enrollment for Highly Capable will be going to the capacity management task force soon; with the goal of bringing a solution to the board in November. Cascadia (new) is built for 660. Decatur (being vacated by Thornton Creek) can serve 275 – making a total of 935. Current enrollment is 770 and we are growing at close to 10% per year = 840.

Critical Issues: We have several critical issues that need to be brought before the board by November:

- 20 minute longer school day for 2017-18. We agreed to this with SEA in bargaining one year ago – for implementation one year from now. In the short term, we need to decide whether the added 20 minutes goes at the start or end of the school day – or split between the two. We will be engaging the public around these two issues and bringing a recommendation. We need to know by November so we can include that in the transportation bid specs for 2017-18. Note: We also have to negotiate with SEA about what the 20 minutes looks like within the school day; this will be started soon but doesn't need to be completed until a bit later.
- Early Release / Late Start: In our 20 minute discussions with SEA we anticipated shorter weekly Early Release or Late Start to provide PLC/Planning time for teacher teams. We will likely be including that in our surveys regarding the 20 minutes.
- Boundaries for opening two middle schools in 2017-18 were determined by the board two years ago. In most cases those boundaries will remain as decided by the board BUT may now affect parents who had no awareness of those decisions two years ago (eg: if my student was in 4th grade at the time). In other cases, new enrollment information may mean minor tweaks. These decisions are also needed in order to move forward with transportation bid specs.

We will be bringing these issues before the board (in very general terms) at a September 14th work session.

Administrators:

- Dr. Kyle Kinoshita has joined us as Chief of C&I. He started September 1st and introduced himself to the C&I staff during the district-wide PD day on September 1st. C&I staff met for that PD at the Original Van Asselt – Kyle was able to tell them he spent five years in that OVA cafeteria as a student! Kyle's contact information is: kdkinoshita@seattleschools.org
- DoTS interviews began today. Dozens of applications were received. Six were interviewed on Friday in the first round of interviews.

Start of School:

- Welcome: It's great to have SchoolMessenger back so we can send some personal greetings as we start the new year. This will also be extremely helpful for our ELL families.
- District-wide PD on Relationships and Resiliency seems to have been well received. This is the first time we have done something district-wide in many years. Thanks to great planning by our team of district leaders, SEA and PASS, the training seems to have successfully conveyed: a) the good work we have done; and b) the gaps that we still need to address.
- Seattle Housing Authority is partnering with us on an attendance campaign. We sent out joint materials sharing how important 100% attendance is during the first month of school.
- Staffing – As you know we hired over 200 “early hires” and were fully staffed in special education, dual language and nursing at the end of June. Since then, we have had resignations and we now have unfilled positions. We also have close to 100 employees with pending certificates. OSPI has provided a work around for some of those teachers. Others will have to sit out until they get their certificates renewed. We cannot pay teachers without current certificates.

Board Agenda – we will ask that two items be removed from the September 7th agenda:

- Duwamish Resolution – we are following up on the board discussion about other tribes and want to have those discussions before bringing the resolution forward; we are aiming for October 12th board meeting which is also Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Magnolia racial imbalance is also being reviewed following the board discussion at that last meeting.

Issues –

- Lowell Clean Up was handled quickly by district and city working together.
- Garfield has not cancelled their 9th grade meeting regarding honors; it was rescheduled in order to provide translation services.
- Special Education decision – The board decision regarding a placement complaint has been redacted and is being made available publicly.
- Loyal Heights lawsuit says we are using the inside courtyard as play area.

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 Business & Finance Update: Attached please find Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance JoLynn Berge's update for this week.