

Board Special Meeting

2445 – 3rd Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134



Curriculum & Instruction Policy Committee of the Whole

Thursday, March 16, 2017; 6:30-7:30pm

Auditorium, John Stanford Center

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. All Directors were present. This meeting was staffed by Superintendent Dr. Larry Nyland, Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Michael Tolley, Chief of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Kyle Kinoshita, Chief of Student Support Services Wyeth Jessee, Assessment Manager Megan Bale.

Director Peters asked if the agenda includes the draft of the policy that Dir. Burke had submitted to the Curriculum & Instruction (C&I) Policy Committee. Dir. Burke noted that the policy in the packet encompasses some of the suggested edits per the committee meeting, and that his proposed draft was not intended to be included this evening. Director Peters moved to approve the agenda. Director Harris seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

Michael Tolley introduced the team who is here to present to the School Board this evening. Mr. Tolley reviewed the agenda for this evening's Committee of the Whole and discussed the desired feedback and outcomes.

Dr. Kinoshita described the core ideas of student assessments and the variety of tools that are functions of assessment for students. He noted four main categories in balanced assessments: Formative, Interim, Summative and Performance based. Dr. Kinoshita described in detail each of the four types of assessment, as described on the slides, and included examples. He noted formal and informal assessment procedures to inform both whole class and small, individualized instruction.

Mr. Jessee discussed interim assessments done in the classrooms against a set of standards across many classrooms in any content area. He provided examples from the outlier schools that use interim assessments to inform the instructional practices between teachers within their school. Mr. Jessee noted that these assessments are informed and responsive to the students' needs in a standardized and immediate manner.

Dr. Kinoshita noted that summative assessments are large chunks of information to assess kids learning over a longer period. He provided examples of the variety of summative assessments. Dr. Kinoshita noted the Performance assessments which students apply the knowledge that they have learned, as in project-based learning, that are completed at the end of a period of learning or instruction.

Mr. Jessee noted that we need somewhere to house this data for staff to be able to see it in one place and that is easily shared with staff to know the whole story for all the staff working with each individual student. He introduced School Data Solutions who conducting the field test at fifteen schools in the district. Joe Tansy from School Data Solutions provided an overview of the "Homeroom" project data portal.

Directors and staff discussed the capturing of data from different types of assessments, including rubrics and quality of product grades. Mr. Jessee noted there are different types of performance tasks with scores of mastery or set of standards. He provided examples of the types of assessments and grading tools.

Mr. Tansy provided an overview of his company and their work with other districts and the safety of the data to the portal and compliant around student confidentiality. He further discussed the school districts that their company has worked with and the various needs and customized portals for each, further walking through different tabs on the website, including interventions, graduation planning and additional resources for principals, teachers and counselors.

Dir. Blanford asked if teachers need to pre-identify the information they want or can it be reconfigured throughout the year. Mr. Tansy noted that it is a highly iterative process and can be refined and customized at any time. Directors and staff discussed the validity of data regarding what is put in to the system and discussed the role of the data is to empower staff and school leaders to make changes to instructional practices when needed.

Dir. Peters asked how this data portal fits in to today's discussion on Assessments. Mr. Jessee noted that at the C&I Policy Committee meetings, Directors have asked for this information and wanted to know where the data went and how it is used.

Dir. Harris asked a series of questions that she would like staff to consider and respond to outside of this meeting. Dir. Burke asked for all other questions to be held at this time and emailed to staff after the meeting.

Dr. Kinoshita noted the development process for the draft of the policy, including looking at existing policies to not overlap or duplicate, looking at the collective bargaining agreement and the applicable state laws and regulations. He noted looking at benchmarking districts at what their policies state. Dr. Kinoshita noted the need to define the beliefs and terminology, purpose, types, legal requirements, rights and annual review within the policy.

Ms. Bale noted the stakeholders that were engaged in the process as indicated on the slide, and noted the timeline for those engagements. She noted the draft plan in the document regarding the engagement process, which is an iterative document. Ms. Bale noted the themes of feedback and concerns that staff heard while in the engagement process. She noted that feedback indicated that they do not want the policy to be a barrier to getting the implementation if the policy is too prescriptive. Ms. Bale noted also meeting with students at two schools already and two more meetings coming up. Those students shared their feedback with staff and asked for assessments to be meaningful and relevant.

Due to time constraints, Dir. Buke asked staff to go around the table and provide their concerns and questions for staff to responds to outside of the meeting. Each director provided some questions and concerns for staff consideration. Dir. Burke asked directors to send further feedback to staff directly.

Dir. Burk adjourned the meeting at 7:46pm

Follow up from Committee of the Whole, Assessments
March 16, 2017

Themes in Policy Revision Suggestions from Directors.

Broad themes from Director feedback:

Directors are seeking clarity on:

- Student and parent rights with attention to issues of over-testing, “opt-outs”, and timely and appropriate sharing of results;
- Policy purpose, specifically what is our philosophy of assessment, language around balance between assessment and instruction and clarity of purpose of assessment in SPS;
- Greater transparency in assessment selection and implementation;
- And finally a clear, transparent process for selecting assessments with clear guidance as to the role of the school board in this process

Specific Policy Revision Suggestions from Directors Related to Broad Themes:

Student and Parent Rights

- Greater explanation of rights of students and parents (Peters)
- Timely sharing of results (Peters)
- Parents should be notified even if assessments are not mandated (Peters)
- What to do for students who opt out (Pinkham)
- Commit to not over-assessing vs. engaging or instructing (Peters)
- Language of what assessments are not: “duplicative”, labeling students, creating anxiety in educational environment (Geary)
- Using results appropriately, children being negatively impacted (Geary)
- What to do for students who opt out (Pinkham)
- Punitive treatment of opt out students needs to be addressed (Harris)
- Timeliness of assessment outcomes, build in formula for receiving results (Harris)
- Student bill of rights (peters)
- What is meant by language of “affirm diverse populations” (Peters)

Policy Purpose

- What is our definition of a balanced assessment framework? (Peters)
- What does staff believe the purpose of the policy is? (Peters)
- Want sense of district philosophy of how we use assessment and balance between assessment and instruction (Peters)
- Purpose of assessment should be to figure out areas when our students are failing (Patu)
- Need to address why we are using assessments (Patu)

- Not enough emphasis on why we are using assessments (Blanford)
- Benefit to system and teachers needs to be expanded for rationale for an assessment policy. Nibbling around the edge limits impact and benefit of assessments (Blanford)
- Would like to see we are not just assessing the students but assessing the schools in how they are delivering the curriculum (Pinkham)
- Students aren't engaged and don't feel valued (Pinkham)
- Be more reflective of curriculum, more inclusive (Pinkham)
- Clarify scope of assessments covered by policy (Burke)
- More clarity on interim and summative (Burke)
- Philosophy statement – assessment as integral to instruction (Burke)
- Why do we still have an achievement gap when we are assessing students so much? (Patu)

Transparency in Assessment

- Use phrase “opt out” and be more explicit (Peters)
- Report of assessments formally adopted (Burke)
- Know assessments being administered and options of parents to not participate (Peters)
- Parents should be notified even if assessments are not mandated (Peters)

Assessment Selection and Board Involvement in Process

- What is the role of the school board in approval of assessments? (Peters)
- Explicit adoption process including theory of action and why for each tool. What is problem trying to solve (Burke)
- Pilot study is imperative (Burke)
- Want assessments with amounts approaching or exceeding 250k to come to board (Peters)
- Cultural bias of assessments need to be address in policy (Harris)
- Not transparent in selection and use. Mystery around use of assessments. Want to formalize process and be transparent (Peters)
- Want continuity – consistent, centrally funded and trained, research prove, stable, effective, sustainable (Burke)
- Who selects the assessment tools (p 3) (Peters)

Community Engagement Process Feedback

- Who are levy partners (community engagement) Harris
- Reaching out to opt out groups (Harris)
- SEA/SPS committee – community engagement, families (Burke)