Advanced Learning Task Force
ALTF Meeting #23
December 10th, 2019
4:00 am – 7:00 pm
John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence Room 2776
2445 3rd Ave S, Seattle, WA 98134

Present: Deenie Berry, Devin Bruckner, Dominique Daba, Kari Hanson, Nancy Hertzog, Mary Kunce, Valeri Makam, Vanessa Meraki, Joanna Noonan, Kari O’Driscoll, Colin Pierce, Andrew Siegel, Christine Tang, Ji-Young Um, Julie Van Arcken, Ursula White-Oliver, Theresa Yeh, Tara Smith

Absent: Laurie Bohm, Jackie Cable, Jonathan Carroll-Madden, Stacia Hawkinson, Wyeth Jessee, Deborah Northern.

Guests: Cliff Meyer, Andrea Peterman, Dahlia Bazzaz, Rachel Nakanishi, Peter Carlin, Martin Saxer, Alex Feldman, Denise Juneau, Sheri Kokx.

4:05pm Welcome and Introduction
Tara Smith called the meeting to order and welcomed the task force.

Superintendent Denise Juneau provided brief remarks, thanking the task for all their time and dedication, and ensuring them that their recommendations would be included in the Board and District’s future work.

Tara confirmed a quorum with 15 voting members present and reviewed the voting process: recommendations pass with a simple majority.

4:15pm Comments on the Task Force Process
A task force member expressed feeling alarmed to be voting on issues that haven’t been discussed previously by the full task force. This perspective was seconded by another member of the task force.
In response, another task force member stated that while the task force may not have discussed the recommendations in their final form, they felt that the recommendations built on many previous conversations the task force has had.

4:20 Voting on Services Recommendations

Results of voting are titled “APPROVED, TIED, or FAILED,” in addition to being described via text.
Abstentions do not count toward voting results.
** indicates unanimous approval

Preamble: All ALTF members want to serve students who need Highly Capable services well and provide them with the resources and support needed for academic and personal growth. We all support the recommendation that every neighborhood school should provide a robust array of evidence-based, culturally responsive advanced learning services to all students who show need for or potential to benefit from such services, supported by professional development and resource allocation from the district. We further agree that alternative placement(s) must be created to serve students with highly individualized learning needs. After much research, consideration and debate, we continue to have varying views about the role of a self-contained cohort in the future and whether it should be large or small and our recommendations reflect our diversity of perspectives on this issue.

APPROVED: Services Preamble Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 12 Nay 1 Abstain 2

#1: Strengthening Services at Neighborhood Schools: We recommend that:
● Decision making practices and delivery of services align to the district MTSS framework; identifying, targeting and delivering services informed by district and classroom data and responsive to the unique needs of students.
● The district will commit to provide equitable enriched tier one services for all students, as well as tier 2 and 3 supports designed to elevate, accelerate, and respond to more intensive needs.1
● Schools shall follow a standard procedure for routine and systematic review of outcome data. This review should also evaluate whether all racial disproportionality is being eliminated in all facets of advanced learning services, from identification to participation to outcomes.

APPROVED: Services #1 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 14 Nay 0 Abstain 1.

#2: Immediate Actions Once Student Needs Are Identified: We recommend that once students’ needs for or potential to benefit from advanced learning services are identified:
● Students receive appropriate, tiered instruction at their level of proximal development immediately, regardless of the structures established for testing/selection Parents/guardians are notified and engaged

1 See Services Appendix 1 for an Example of Tiered Services
• Students receive a learning plan (tier 3 service need only) that acknowledges their strengths, needs and preferences.
• Schools will report participation in services and partner with Central office to review student’s participation in tiers 2 and 3 to ensure that there is proportionate participation across tiers, using the Fed 7 categories and focusing on historically underserved students of color and especially African American students.

**APPROVED:** Services #2 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 13 Nay 0 Abstain 2.**

#3: Work towards a goal of equitably serving most students identified as needing HC services in their neighborhood schools, with alternative placements available for a smaller set of students whose highly individualized needs are not and cannot realistically be met in their local schools per a set of objective criteria.

**APPROVED:** Services #3 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 9 Nay 6 Abstain 0.**

#4: Hold the district and neighborhood schools accountable to provide consistent HC services, with strong support from the district, and also offer self-contained services for students in an alternative setting who are identified as needing or potentially benefiting from HC services, in a racially equitable, anti-racist, culturally responsible, neurodiverse and economically diverse cohort.

**APPROVED:** Services #4 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 13 Nay 1 Abstain 1.**

#5: *Creation of Opt-In Pilot Programs for Advanced Learning Services at Neighborhood Schools*

Do not remove any current service models until there are a set of systems and structures in place that have been shown to effectively serve students. We recommend creating an opt-in pilot program (for all schools who choose to participate), starting an initial phase as soon as possible, for delivering Advanced Learning services at a selection of neighborhood schools across the district, both Title 1 and not Title 1. Such a pilot would require the district to:

- Create a list of success criteria and go-forward thresholds in advance, including such criteria as SBA math and ELA scores, and program climate surveys and SEL surveys from participating families.
- Compare program performance of the cohort vs. the pilot programs. If pilots at all schools meets predetermined thresholds of performance (e.g. within X percentage points on each program success criterion), that could be used as an indication to expand that service delivery model district-wide and that the cohort model in its current form is not needed.
- Allocate additional resources to Title I schools compared to other schools to provide needed HC services
- As part of the pilot, potentially offer an established, advanced learning framework--such as IB--at the Elementary and Middle School level as a vertically-aligned service offering option, funded by the district.
- Develop a plan in case the pilot is unsuccessful, so we avoid reverting to the status quo.

Participants in the pilot will include students identified as needing HC services but preferring to participate in a neighborhood pilot, as well as those identified under the new criteria.

**APPROVED:** Services #5 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 11 Nay 4 Abstain 0.**

#6: *Creating an Intentional Potential Transition Plan:*
During a multi-year neighborhood school pilot phase, SPS can develop more detailed plans for how it could phase out the self-contained cohort model over time and move to a service model where most students who need HC services are served in neighborhood schools (with a smaller set of students with more intensive needs being served in alternative placements). That plan should include:

- grandfathering of students with existing placements
- likely a phased roll out over time
- time for any boundary changes needed to be planned for and approved
- detailed guidance and support from the Central Office on how neighborhood schools can and should effectively serve students who need Advanced Learning services
- clarity on the financial resources needed to do this well.

If and when the neighborhood school pilot meets the performance goals, the necessary financial resources are available, and a robust analysis of impacts (as outlined in Recommendation #7), then SPS shall implement a district-wide transition to a more neighborhood school-based service model, with self-contained options only available for students who need highly individualized advanced learning services in alternative placements.

**APPROVED:** Services #6 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 12** Nay 1 Abstain 2.

**#7: Comparison of Service Models:**
The Advanced Learning Department, in conjunction with the Highly Capable & Racial Equity Services Advisory Committee, shall make a comparison of neighborhood school delivery models and self-contained models. This comparison shall be made during the opt-in pilot program and the first two years of improved cohort procedures (including identification practices and professional development addressing culturally responsive teaching practices, inclusive environments, and best practices for differentiating). The comparison will use data collected at least yearly, including but not limited to:

- participation, i.e. numbers and demographics of students receiving advanced learning services of any type
- student academic outcomes assessed at their instructional level
- student and family surveys, including measures of social-emotional well-being and satisfaction with program services, in addition to district climate surveys
- staff survey, answering questions such as:
  - Does your school receive adequate support to meet students’ advanced learning needs?
  - Are programs visibly distinct by race at your school?
  - How do advanced learning services affect the inclusivity of your school community?
- community survey, answering questions such as:
  - Are Advanced Learning offerings perceived as racist and elitist?
  - Does your school offer high quality instruction?
- cost of implementation
comparison of outcomes of neighborhood schools to one another to answer the question:
  ○ Are services being delivered equitably at all types of schools?
  ○ Do services vary according to school resources (PTA, etc.)

Considering the benefits, burdens and harms observed in each model, decide whether to phase out broader self-contained services as outlined in SERVICES Recommendation #6, or continue to offer them as one option within an array of fully funded and supported services that include robust services at each and every neighborhood school.

Notes:
● In this comparison, academic outcomes for students participating in advanced learning services shall be weighed equally with other benefits, burdens and harms.
● If neighborhood school services are not performing well compared to self-contained services, they shall not be discontinued, but resources shall be provided to strengthen them. There will always be some students at neighborhood schools who require advanced learning services, and schools must be equipped to serve them, regardless of whether a self-contained model exists.

**APPROVED:** Services #7 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 9 Nay 3 Abstain 3.

#8: Develop needs-based, consistent framework (based on WAC #392-170-078) for all students receiving HC services and develop procedures and a procedural guide to frame services and guide all schools in the delivery of enhanced and accelerated, tiered supports to all students, including educating schools as to the contents of the guide. There should also be a consistent reporting for families that tracks growth through provided services and is sent to families at all grading periods.

**APPROVED:** Services #8 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 13 Nay 0 Abstain 2.

#9: Alternative Placements for Students with Highly Individualized Advanced Learning Needs:
The Advanced Learning Department, in partnership with the Special Education Department, should develop Alternative Placements at elementary, middle, high school, and transition (18-21 year old) levels, designed to meet students’ highly individualized advanced learning needs, as referenced in IDENTIFICATION Recommendation #6.
● Students who need these programs require and/or would benefit from advanced learning services and opportunities to learn with true peers in order to have an appropriate education; they also have atypical instruction and/or advanced learning needs, due to asynchronous development with high cognitive and/or academic ability (e.g.: more than 2 years above same age peers). In addition, they could experience one or more of the following: neurodivergence, learning disability, history of school discipline, history of trauma, and/or other atypical, highly capable academic and social-emotional needs, which would cause alienation and make them socially and academically isolated or in a typical school environment.
● Staff at these programs shall receive ongoing professional development and coaching to continually improve their ability to deliver high-quality instruction and meet the needs of each exceptional learner.
● These programs shall be adequately staffed to meet the IEP needs of students with disabilities enrolled in the program, including meeting the staff-to-student ratio of the
program through which they would be served if they were at their neighborhood school (e.g. Access, Resource, etc.)

- These programs shall prioritize partnership with families, including Person Centered Planning, to understand and meet student needs.
- These programs shall be equitably sited throughout the district, such that they are available to students in any geographical area without undue burden, and such that they are not visibly distinct from the general school population by race.
- Wrap-around services, including family support worker, nurse, counselor, language support, community partners, shall be available at these programs to meet student needs.
- These programs shall have a careful and purposeful system to ensure continuity of care for students rising from elementary to middle, middle to high, and high to transition (where appropriate).
- The district shall be held accountable achieving equity in participation and learning outcomes in these programs, as referenced in IDENTIFICATION Recommendations #2 & #7, and ACCOUNTABILITY Recommendations #3 & #4. These programs shall not become warehouses for students with complex needs, nor boutique programs for the privileged.
- Best practices for academic instruction, social-emotional development, and family partnership shall be shared from the Alternative Placement sites to neighborhood schools, to further strengthen the capacity of neighborhood schools to understand and meet highly individualized learning needs.
- Staff from the Alternative Placement sites shall work with school-based MSCs to iteratively improve procedures for equitably identifying students with highly individualized learning needs.

**APPROVED:** Services #9 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 12 Nay 1 Abstain 2.

#10: Middle/High School Offerings: Seattle's comprehensive high schools currently have extremely inequitable advanced learning offerings. We recommend that:

- The district should guarantee students at all of the comprehensive high schools, access to a baseline set of AP or IB classes, including ELA, math, science, social studies, and at least one world language. These courses will be offered regardless of the number of students at that school taking each course. The district should work toward a future state in which no comprehensive high school offers more core-curriculum AP or IB course offerings than any other comprehensive high school, and the district will annually review progress toward that goal.
- Each comprehensive middle school should likewise guarantee all students access to vertically aligned coursework pathways that will enable them to complete the highest level of advanced class within four years of high school in ELA, math, and science. Additionally, each comprehensive middle school should offer at least one world language. For example, if the new baseline requires high schools to offer AP Calculus BC, then all comprehensive middle schools should offer a progression of math classes that lead to AP Calculus BC in students’ senior year. Middle schools and elementary schools are also encouraged to consider adopting an advanced learning framework such as IB, which offers a robust curriculum for students of all ages.
• The district should also eliminate all racial disproportionality in eligibility, participation, student and family satisfaction, and academic outcomes in AP and IB classes. The district should set specific incremental goals toward this larger goal, and review progress annually. Achieving this goal would likely require steps such as
  ○ minimizing prerequisites
  ○ making the classes more culturally relevant
  ○ hiring more teachers of color to teach the classes,
  ○ requiring all students at the school to take an AP or IB class
  ○ offering tutoring or other individual support
• In order to support this advanced learning baseline at all comprehensive middle and high schools, the district should adjust the school funding model to divert funding from wealthier schools to less affluent ones, perhaps by increasing the weight of the equity factor in the Weighted Staffing Standard. This funding should be used to staff the newly added classes so that principals will never divert funding from students working below grade level. Additionally, the funding should be used to fund the support needed to eliminate all racial disproportionality in these classes.
• Each school shall have at least one staff member familiar with the unique social-emotional needs of children and adolescents receiving HC services, including cultural responsivity and neurodivergence, such that the schools can adequately meet the needs of these students with an eye toward ensuring their academic and social success in these programs.

APPROVED: Services #10 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 14 Nay 0 Abstain 1.

#11: All Advanced Learning classes will be offered within district schools. Though some students may choose to take Running Start classes, Running Start will never be considered part of the Advanced Learning offering because students’ Special Education Individual Education Plans do not transfer to community colleges, where Running Start classes are offered.
APPROVED: Services #11 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 7 Nay 3 Abstain 5.

#12: AL Teams: Each school will have an Advanced Learning Team, that will create a plan for their school to move forward Advanced Learning with a racial equity lens, including analyzing relevant data, making changes in school practice, spearheading events and campaigns, and providing PD to their schools. The team members receive a stipend and are required to go to PD about 4 times a year; teams in their first year have monthly PD.
APPROVED: Services #12 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 14 Nay 0 Abstain 1.

#13: If possible, consider economies of scale train all AL teachers at the same time or range with multiple cohorts. Then require new hires to have or acquire the training as part of the hiring process)
APPROVED: Services #13 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 8 Nay 3 Abstain 4.

#14: When introducing new programs and considering locations .... Partner with City of Seattle city planning commission/department. Consider their project and plan for ways to implement without causing inequities or redlining principles and without furthering gentrification. Memorial always included in the process celebrating a noteworthy historical figure.
Services Appendix 1 - Example of Tiered Services

The table below is intended to provide an example of what tiered services in an MTSS framework could look like. It can and should be refined as the process is further developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1: For all students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Culturally responsive teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Strength-based focus for accessing and delivering services</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Assessment practices conducive to ALs to include: pre and post assessments, ongoing, responsive and timely multi-modal assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Differentiation of core curriculum for all and targeting advanced learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Enrichment</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Enhanced pacing</td>
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<tr>
<td>● In-class flexible grouping regrouping</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Project Based Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Mentorship</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 2 &amp; Tier 3: Services available to some students with General Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Responsive learning experiences to asynchronous development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Curriculum compacting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Flexible and cluster grouping</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Independent projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Content acceleration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Supplemental instruction in area of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Curricular compacting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Individual Learning Plan (Tier 3 only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 3: Services available to a few students: unique, accelerated services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Alternative Setting available only to these students (i.e., Self-contained, Exclusive Pull-out)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Individual learning plans required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ including addressing asynchronistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Responsive learning experiences to asynchronous development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Unique or Non-traditional services including but not limited to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ services provided through cooperative arrangement with ESD or other districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPROVED:** Services Appendix 1 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 8 Nay 4 Abstain 3.**
4:45pm Voting on Structural Recommendations

#1: We recommend that the district allocate additional financial resources to ensure equitable and consistent and ongoing delivery of Advanced Learning services at all schools.

**APPROVED:** Structural #1 Formal Vote 9/17/19: Yea 14 Nay 0 Abstain 0.

#2: We recommend prioritizing provision of resources, human and financial, including AL Teams as described in Services recommendations #12, with an equity lens to schools with a disproportionately high percentage, compared to total district enrollment, of students who are SOC, ELL, FRL, and other groups farthest from educational justice.

**APPROVED:** Structural #2 Formal Vote- Yea: 15 Nay 0 Abstain 0 on 12/10/19

#3: Prioritize SE Seattle in geographic decisions, to increase access, resources and services in that region.

APPROVED: Structural #3 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 11 Nay 1 Abstain 3.

#4: We recommend that all students receiving highly capable services be reported to the state (as required by WAC 392-170-090) and that the services they receive should be reflected in their report card or communicated to parents by other means.

Tabled for further discussion

#5: Change the terms used to describe services from “Highly Capable” to “Accelerated Learning” or another term that does not include HC or gifted. Also, If needed, change the name of the Advanced Learning department.

APPROVED: Structural #5 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 7 Nay 5 Abstain 3.

#5B: Change the name to exception/ deviation based learning, learner variability or something in that order. If some kids are 2e, some are single domain, some are gifted, some are accelerated, some are talented, etc... then they are the exceptions. Not better just different.

FAILED: Structural #5B Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 4 Nay 7 Abstain 4.

#6: The Advanced Learning Department should hold schools and Advanced Learning Teams accountable for retention rates and growth for all students identified for services, including no disproportionality in retention and growth along FED7 categories.

APPROVED: Structural #6 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 13 Nay 0 Abstain 2.

#7: Professional Development Related To Advanced Learning: We recommend that the Advanced Learning Department seek out, support, and deliver required ongoing, actionable, and culturally transformative professional development, in partnership with other Central Departments, so that all school and central office staff receive ongoing development in the evaluation, identification, selection and service of students who have potential to benefit from advanced learning services.
• Professional development shall educate central office and school staff about bias and how bias has been ingrained and sustained systemically, and how to undo that bias and its effects.
• There should be a focus on students from historically underrepresented populations and help them fulfill all the commitments and recommendations stated above.
• Professional development should be required and tiered to focus on schools with lower proportions of underrepresented students who have been identified for advanced learning services and implement systems of monitoring effectiveness based in data.
  • There should be a process and annual report to identify which schools will receive more PD, based on student needs and outcomes
  • Assess and evaluate trends and gaps in services and identification, and design PD plan accordingly
  • Center the needs of students of color farthest from educational justice and 2e students seek out professional expertise to provide professional development to meet their needs.

**APPROVED:** Structural #7 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 15 Nay 0 Abstain 0.**

#8: Professional Development Related to Anti-Racism & Culture Shift: We recommend that professional development, training, and coaching work toward a culture shift to create fully inclusive, anti-racist school communities, including professional development in culturally responsive teaching for all school personnel.
**APPROVED:** Structural #8 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 15 Nay 0 Abstain 0.**

#9: We recommend that the district measure, monitor and learn from teachers’ disciplinary actions, academic advancement actions, and advanced learning referrals to identify disparities. These measures will not be used to judge performance of teachers. Rather the information will be used to identify areas for improvement and professional development of all teachers, administrators and staff. The measures of improvement should be made public as a demonstration of continuous improvement efforts and compliance with the strategic plan. The purpose of the evaluation as it relates to Advanced Learning is to identify correlations between behavior and performance improvements. As the culture and environment becomes more inclusive the number of students identified should increase and be retained. **FAILED:** Structural #9 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 3 Nay 7 Abstain 5.**

#10: Students should have access to both appropriate Special Education AND Advanced Learning services. Currently students must choose between the two, and often, they are treated with a deficit-based approach only for their behaviors, but their academic needs are not met. **APPROVED:** Formal Structural #10 Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 15 Nay 0 Abstain 0.**

#11: Students receiving wrap-around services at Title I schools who are identified as needing HC services at a location outside of their neighborhood school should not lose access to wrap around services as part of an alternative placement. Location of program placement should consider this and/or supplemental services should be provided. **APPROVED:** Structural #11 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 15 Nay 0 Abstain 0.**

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2 To possibly be added: Specific language around MSC, practice examples from paper document, language around advanced learning specialists, and proposed PD topics to prioritize
#12: For any alternative settings or programs, avoid situations where programs are visibly distinct by race from the school in which they are located, as in Thurgood Marshall, Washington and Garfield.

**APPROVED:** Structural #12 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 10 Nay 1 Abstain 4.**

#13: We recommend instituting a district wide initiative for culture change, celebrating diversity, such as the students’ racial and cultural identities and neurodiversity, including choosing a district wide certification such as District of Character and of Distinction. The initiative should be inclusive, with emphasis on students, staff, parents and community.

**APPROVED:** Structural #13 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 10 Nay 1 Abstain 4.**

### 5:00pm Voting on Accountability Recommendations

#1: **Process:** We recommend a formal adoption, implementation and operationalization process to enact the overhaul outlined in these recommendations, including the goal of eliminating racial disproportionality in Advanced Learning services by 2025.

- The process would include change management and communication plans. In addition, the process would result in a continuous improvement process that take the recommended measures and report out regularly and be reviewed annually to include what actions for improvement were taken.
- The process should map to Services Recommendations 5, 6 and 7
- The process documents would be reviewed by at least 3-4 racially, socioeconomically, geographically, etc. diverse stakeholder groups.

**APPROVED:** Accountability #1 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 11 Nay 2 Abstain 2.**

#2: **Communication Plan:** We recommend a two-way communication plan to present changes so as to diminish the community anxiety and ensure an inclusive approach to reach as many parents, staff, teachers, administrators and community partners/members as possible, and to receive and address input from the community. Information should also be shared with the schools, specifically school AL Teams, MSCs and people at schools who have the most contact with families (office staff, instructional assistants, classroom teachers) that help to communicate relevant information (e.g. decisions, needs, changes, issues).

**APPROVED:** Accountability #2 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 14 Nay 1 Abstain 0.**

#3: **Re-Branding:** Implement a rebranding of advanced learning services that incorporates the ideas of these recommendations that moves forward the vision of racial equity.

**APPROVED:** Accountability #3 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 8 Nay 2 Abstain 5.**

#4: **Progress Check and Adjustment:**

- If SPS doesn’t identify close to racially proportional number of new students needing HC services in 2 years, then the district will make major revisions to increase racial proportionality in identification approach in 2 years.
- If the service model increases racial segregation (compared to general education services) in 5 years (in neighborhood or alternative settings), 2025, we recommend that the service model will be adjusted. Number of years may need to be adjusted based on implementation timeline.
APPROVED: Accountability #4 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 8 Nay 2 Abstain 5.

#5: Advisory Committee: We recommend that a Highly Capable & Racial Equity Advisory Committee be established, and charged to advise on development and implementation of procedures including exploring ways to enhance the social/emotional experience of school for students who have potential to benefit from advanced learning services, especially students from historically underrepresented populations and neurodivergent students.

Tabled for further discussion

5:10pm Voting on Identification Recommendations

#1: Implement and work toward a goal of identifying Black and Brown students, in order to reduce racial disparities in HC identification, and have the disparities eliminated entirely by 2025 and sustain equity.

APPROVED: Identification #1 Formal Vote 9/17/19: Yea 11 Nay 3 Abstain 0.

Multidisciplinary Selection Committee (MSC)

#2: We recommend that identification and selection become a jointly held process that includes schools and the Central Office. School-based MSCs will be responsible for screening, identifying and matching services to students’ needs.

- School-based MSCs should be diverse and representative of the student population as much as possible, including those required by law but not limited to the following staff: classroom teachers, academic intervention specialist, ELL specialist, SpEd specialist, school counselor, gifted education specialist, and staff all of whom have completed and continue to receive implicit bias training.
- School-based MSCs should lead on equitably identifying students who may have potential to benefit from advanced learning services AND students whose advanced learning needs may be unique, thus qualifying them for more intensive services. Schools should also collaborate with families who initiate the request for AL services.
- The Central Office will primarily be held accountable for establishing and maintaining fidelity of implementation. Central office should review quarterly the identified students and services in order to ensure equitable access along FED7 categories. Identification practices should be adjusted if criteria are not met.
- At the elementary level, the MSCs shall assess all students without solely relying on referrals.
- At the secondary level, the MSCs should inform the creation of the master schedule. The MSC should include experts across disciplines (beyond literacy and math) in order to identify students with advanced learning needs in other content areas.
- It is imperative that schools, in partnership with the Central Office intentionally seek out ELL/ FRL/ low-income/ 2E/ underrepresented students, by collaborating with staff (such as instructional assistants, family support workers, social workers, community partners, case workers, etc.) who work directly with those student populations.
APPROVED: Identification #2 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 14 Nay 0 Abstain 1.

**Process & Criteria**

#3: The Multidisciplinary Selection Committee (MSC) at each school will use a consistent, equity-based process that identifies students as eligible for Advanced Learning services. The selection criteria and process should:

- Not require parent referrals for students to be considered for Advanced Learning services, but shall include a clear, transparent and accessible process for teacher, school, family and community referrals, and self-referral or self-advocacy, particularly from historically underrepresented and underidentified communities.
- Include multiple objective criteria (e.g. curriculum-based and summative assessments, student work, portfolio, developmental history, cognitive assessment). Objective criteria can also include performance across classes or years, English-language proficiency scores and rate of acquisition, diversity at school/class level, oral assessment, and discrepancies between achievement scores and class performance.
- Minimize the use of subjective criteria and portfolios prepared with family assistance in such a way that traditionally favors privileged students and puts unfair burdens on underrepresented students. Subjective criteria (such as teacher rating scales) can be used to identify (but not exclude) underrepresented students and students of color furthest from educational justice for Advanced Learning services.
- Allow multiple pathways for identification, however that does not mean that students must meet a burdensome number of criteria. Students can qualify for services based on at least two criteria that indicate need for Advanced Learning/highly capable services. Selection measures will be evaluated for bias and selected to ensure equitable access to services.

** APPROVED: Identification #3 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 15 Nay 0 Abstain 0.

#4: We recommend ending discriminatory referral practices, including but not limited to

- hard to access electronic referral forms
- use of The Source as primary place to submit a referral
- burdensome parent rating scale

** APPROVED: Identification #4 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 15 Nay 0 Abstain 0.

#5: Students can be identified as needing Highly Capable services in a single subject area (e.g. single domain).

** APPROVED: Identification #5 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 15 Nay 0 Abstain 0.

#6: The district should clearly define what the identification criteria would be for a student to receive HC services (or Tier II vs Tier III services) and the criteria and process by which students become eligible for an alternative placement, including objective criteria to be used to determine when a student’s needs are not and cannot realistically be met in their neighborhood school.

- If students identified as having high ability or potential do not demonstrate the expected growth, consider assigning them to a higher tier
● When appropriate, district can use above-level or ceiling less testing to show highest level of student performance
● Some students because of their disability (including 2E status, identified or otherwise), cognitive/learning profile and/or distinct socioemotional needs may find it difficult to learn in General Education classrooms and may need an alternative placement.
● The District will implement a layer of governance, including an annual process to review the procedures, qualifications, and process for placement in an alternative setting. These procedures, qualifications, and processes must both meet individual student needs and create equity for students of color furthest from educational justice.

APPROVED: Identification #6 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 10 Nay 1 Abstain 4.

#7: We recommend that the Advanced Learning department no longer identify a separate category of students as “Advanced Learners”, as distinct from “Highly Capable”.

APPROVED: Identification #7 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 13 Nay 0 Abstain 2.

#8: We recommend avoiding labeling students where possible and allowable by law, and instead identifying student needs and matching those needs with services (acknowledging that students’ records would and should reflect when they have been identified as needing and a recipient of Advanced Learning services). The intention of identification is to ensure appropriate services and provide a safeguard for children who are often overlooked.

APPROVED: Identification #8 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 8 Nay 3 Abstain 4.

Due to a typo, there is no Identification recommendation #9

#10: We recommend that the district MSC invoke a process to strategize future identification approach improvements. The process should be reviewed annually and updated by a majority vote of the MSC. Publications may provide breakthroughs on identifications that classify students as gifted in ways the district has not thought of before.

TIED: Identification #10 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 5 Nay 5 Abstain 5.

#11: Local Norms
● Local Norms Influencing Central Office Referrals: We recommend immediate implementation of local norms (norms allowing within-group comparisons so underrepresented students are compared with students who share similar demographic characteristics) for automatic referral by the district’s MSC team to the school-based MSC teams for FRL, ELL, underrepresented students of color, and other Fed 7 groups who score in the top 15% on achievement tests (MAP or SBA). Local norms here are not meant as building site-based norms.

APPROVED: Identification #11 first bullet Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 13 Nay 1 Abstain 1.

● Local Norms As Used By School-Based MSCs: Where applicable, and effective immediately, school-based MSC teams should use local norms (when appropriate) when determining need for HC services. Specifically, standardized assessment scores should be looked at using local norms, including cognitive and/or achievement tests.
Local norms should be used to compare students with others:
- with FRL status
- with ELL status
- with similar disability status
- (See additional comparison group to be voted on separately below)
- (See additional comparison group to be voted on separately below)

The purpose of using local norms is to provide Advanced Learning services to as many students as possible who need them, especially students furthest from educational justice.

For each group, the MSC should look at standardized assessment scores in comparison to others in that group, to help match with the appropriate service level. This helps match identification to service and is in keeping with the WAC definition of HC students, which includes comparing students to others of their “age, experiences, or environments.” This may mean a student would be identified as HC at one school but not another.

Local norms should be used to help eliminate racial disproportionality in identification across the school district

**APPROVED:** Identification #11 second bullet Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 13** Nay 1 Abstain 1.

#11B: Include “within racial groups underrepresented in Advanced Learning (as allowable by law)” in the local norm comparison groups above

**APPROVED:** Identification #11B Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 11** Nay 1 Abstain 1.

#11C: Include “at their local school” in the local norm comparison groups above.

**APPROVED:** Identification #11C Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 9** Nay 2 Abstain 4.

**Testing & Screening**

We recommend that the district formally acknowledge the cultural, racial and economic bias of standardized assessments. Our recommendations related to the use of standardized assessments are not meant to legitimize what have been used as tools of oppression for decades, but to use the flawed tools in ways that will create the most equitable access to advanced learning services.

**APPROVED:** Identification Testing and Screen Preamble Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 12** Nay 0 Abstain 3.

#12: Identification must include the use of universal (opt-out, not opt-in) screening (using a non-academic cognitive / ability test) in multiple grades as a measure to counteract bias in either referral, achievement testing or parent access to program offerings. Given that SOCs do better on non-verbal reasoning and problem-solving tests, we recommend a non-verbal test that is more culturally fair.

**APPROVED:** Identification #12 without bullet Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 9** Nay 4 Abstain 3.

- If students are identified equitably by other measures, universal testing could be stopped in a future year

**FAILED:** Identification #12 with bullet Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 3 Nay 7 Abstain 5.
#13: Use the Naglieri screener as a low cost test (instead of using the full CogAt test) to be used as an additional objective criteria, in order to identify students who may not have other data sources demonstrating their need for advanced learning services (e.g. students who have not performed well on achievement tests or who have not been referred due to implicit bias).

**APPROVED:** Identification #13 Formal Vote 12/10/19: Yea 6 Nay 2 Abstain 7.

#14: If students already have two qualifying data points, there is no need for the district to administer a cognitive test. If a student does not have high performance on a cognitive abilities test, that shall not disqualify them from Advanced Learning services.

**APPROVED:** Identification #14 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 12** Nay 0 Abstain 3.

#15: The district should explore if racially equitable results can be achieved using existing data sources with local norms, without administering additional tests (e.g. cognitive tests). Since nonverbal cognitive tests appear to also have significant bias and given limited financial and human resources, using existing data may be just as effective and allow staff to better focus on service delivery.

**APPROVED:** Identification #15 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 9** Nay 0 Abstain 6

#16: Any evaluations or assessment for the identification of students for services shall be made available during the school day, in the schools that students attend at the time of assessment (exceptions can be made for 2e students or students for whom testing off site is most appropriate).

**APPROVED:** Identification #16 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 15** Nay 0 Abstain 0.

**Appeals**

#17: The intention of the appeals process is to include students in Advanced Learning services whose need for Advanced Learning services might be masked by other factors, particularly underrepresented students.

- To the extent allowable by law, private testing must be allowed only for FRL students (provided free to families by SPS), students with a disability (including those whose disability is documented as part of the appeal), and for other students farthest from educational justice.
- A process should also be created that allows for appeals or review based on a documented need for services that is not being met. This could happen once students have been matched with services and the services provided are not meeting students’ needs.

**APPROVED:** Identification #17 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 9** Nay 3 Abstain 3.

**5:50pm Additional Comments on the Task Force Process**

Task force members provided additional commentary on the process

It was noted that members received the email with the final recommendation Dec 9th at 12am, in advance of Tuesday night’s meeting. Most of the task force has had less than 24 hours to read the final recommendations in their full.
Another member agreed that it wasn’t a perfect process, especially with the challenges of the sub-group work, but that [not captured by notetaker].

Another member expressed frustration that the task force did all this work and all these meetings, and it felt like the sub-group ended up with all the power. It was echoed that this aspect was disheartening.

One task force member spoke in defense of the work of the sub-group. If we hadn’t used them, we likely would not have had anything to recommend today. He recognized the frustration around the sub-group but had difficulty imagining a cohesive set of recommendations otherwise.

Another member noted that at the meeting before last we had several conversations regarding culture and social emotional needs of students which was never addressed. And these were brought up for 18 months. There has been a lot about this process that has felt inequitable but taking this opportunity to work with the small group [not captured by notetaker]. Getting to hear intimate concerns and passions allowed this member to view the work in a new and more nuanced way.

It was noted that there were multiple times provided to all task force members to add comments before the final recommendations were sent out the day before the meeting. “It hasn’t been a perfect process, but this amount of work is what I signed up for. I didn’t feel like any of the recommendations we voted on were surprising.”

Another member noted that sub-group had the intention of including all the points of view from the past 18 months. Their hope was not to surprise anyone.

The way it worked out rushed in the end was not an ideal process. It was expressed that the sub-groups have been including every comment AND SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATION FROM the google doc and moved them forward into recommendation process. The sub-groups talked actively about recognizing our differing of opinions. It is too bad that some people don’t see this as a compromise as was the best intention of the sub-group.

A member expressed appreciation that every person in the sub-group made an effort to make sure that all sides were represented in a productive way.

It was the process that was unfortunate, and it was difficult to keep up with e-mails. Would love to see a general recommendation on SEL, and a professional facilitator to speak with families about advanced learning services in their own language.

6:00 Prioritizing Further Discussion

Tara Smith facilitated task force decision-making on the following priorities for further discussion:

- Add Services recommendation for SEL
- Clarify the definition of Black and Brown students
- Add example of chart ID3 that Nancy has referenced of different criteria
- #9 Structure: don’t remember it coming it up, ask to have it stricken
• Add to local norms and add language like “when appropriate”
• Be careful of our language to de-pathologize being highly capable
• Revisit the terminology of advanced learning and highly capable. Are they interchangeable? This is potentially problematic
• Go back to tabled items for a quick vote, specifically the Accountability #5 advisory committee, Identification #6
• Services Appendix 1 as an example is perhaps not clear enough
• Go back to tied votes.

Tara polled the group to decide which of the priorities to begin with:
• First vote on tabled items
• Consider Services recommendation for SEL
• Address specific distinction between Highly Capable and Advanced Learning terminology

6:00 Break

Concie Pedroza commented on how impressed she has been with the level of discourse offered by Task Force. She thanked the task force for their hard work.

One task force member needed to leave early, bringing the number of voting members to 14.

6:20 Follow-up Discussion and Voting

Discussion of Structural #4:

A task force member expressed worry that we may end up reporting upwards of 80% of students to the state as highly capable and then we just end up highlighting the students that are not receiving the note on their report card.

Alternative approaches offered:
• Could add in “as defined by the state”
• Could have the implementation group decide who gets reported to the state
• Could vote as is

Another task force member noted that everything the task force has discussed has been about matching services to students, and we have always kept an equity lens to widen the availability of services for students. It is unlikely that most students will be identified as highly capable under a wider definition.

The task force decided to vote on Structural recommendation #4 as is.

Identification #4: We recommend that all students receiving highly capable services be reported to the state (as required by WAC 392-170-090) and that the services they receive should be reflected in their report card or communicated to parents by other means.

**APPROVED:** Structural #4 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 8 Nay 5 Abstain 1.**
Next the task force revisited Accountability recommendation #5 and added the wording “on-going”.

#5: Advisory Committee: We recommend that an on-going Highly Capable & Racial Equity Advisory Committee be established, and charged to advise on development and implementation of procedures including exploring ways to enhance the social/emotional experience of school for students who have potential to benefit from advanced learning services, especially students from historically underrepresented populations and neurodivergent students. **APPROVED:** Accountability #5 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 12** Nay 1 Abstain 1.

Addition to Identification Recommendation #3 after the 2nd bullet point—
Additional Factors to Consider When Looking at a Students’ Need for Advanced Learning Services
- Intense interest in a particular topic
- Students who have not demonstrated high academic achievement may still have needs for advanced learning services
- Child who demonstrates significant need for significant acceleration

**APPROVED:** Identification #3 Addition Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 14** Nay 0 Abstain 0.

The task force voted on an additional recommendation to the Services section.

Added Recommendation to Services Section
#15: Each school shall have at least one staff member familiar with the unique social-emotional needs of children and adolescents receiving HC services, including cultural responsiveness and neurodivergence, such that the schools can adequately meet the needs of these students with an eye toward ensuring their academic and social success in these programs. **APPROVED:** Services #15 Formal Vote 12/10/19: **Yea 6** Nay 2 Abstain 6.

The task force decided not to vote on a specific distinction between Highly Capable and Advanced Learning terminology given the time left in the meeting to discuss.

**7:00 Final Reflections on the Process and Next Steps**

A task force member noted that as an English teacher he was disappointed in the final language of the recommendations, but as a lover of democracy he is happy that we are putting out this messy document that pushes for significant change.

Another member noted that we still run the risk of having the board ignore our recommendations. If any of us are interested in seeing the recommendations result in actual change, we need to continue organizing.
Kari provided concluding remarks. The task force has gone over and above her expectations. She highlighted how the past 18 months have been full of adaptive change work which is challenging.

Kari Hanson and other task force members thanked Tara Smith for all her work in the process.

The report will be released in January (with the vote tallies) from Concie to the Superintendent and will be sent to the task force in advance. An update to the broader community will be provided on the website.

It was mentioned that the report could be crafted in many different ways that could still be true. Kari Hanson assured the the final report would include the task force’s recommendations as passed in this meeting with minimal context. The main context will be the language already written and circulated from the BAR.

In the case of close votes, the task force discussed the opportunity for members to provide a “minority” opinion. The task force decided to allow each person to respond as they needed to avoid the confusion and challenge of further task force coordination.

7:10 Meeting Adjourned