

Board Special Meeting
Oversight Work Sessions: Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction; Special Education
Wednesday, May 31, 2017, 4:30pm-7:30pm
Auditorium, John Stanford Center
2445 – 3rd Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134



Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30pm. Directors Harris, Patu, Burke, Peters, Pinkham, and Geary were present. Director Blanford arrived at 4:34pm.

Oversight Work Session: Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction

This session was staffed by Superintendent Larry Nyland, Chief of Chief of Curriculum, Assessment Kyle Kinoshita, Executive Director of Chief of Curriculum, Assessment Cashel Toner and Director of College and Career Readiness Dan Gallagher.

Dr. Kyle Kinoshita spoke about major areas and directions of the Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction (CAI) department. He explained the theory of action is undergoing a shift: content area teams provide professional development (PD) that teachers would attend by choice. The content areas include formative practices, ELA, Math, PE, and STEM as well as career-technical readiness, arts, and tech/media. CAI will develop framework and tools to provide enriching PD for teachers to attend. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about forming collaborative relationships to establish a unified and professional development system instead of departments working independently with various initiatives that affected departments and schools differently.

Dr. Kinoshita explained that in order to help provide Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to students (MTSS), there has to be a systematic way that central office coordinates and collaborates to achieve the most effective and lasting impact. The strengthening of MTSS will focus on three main areas: provide instructional support and resource for core instruction, provide professional development for school building staff, and supporting the district assessment system.

Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the SWOT analysis on slides 6-9. Dr. Kinoshita wanted to emphasize the work throughout departments and the unified professional development system. Instead of an unorganized variety of professional development or competing for resources, there will be one system and one centralized catalog. Dr. Kinoshita also spoke about the Eliminating Opportunity Gaps (EOG) work and the Identity Safety Institute with school leadership at Leadership Learning Day (LLD). There are about 90 staff members of CAI, serving ten different functions or subject areas.

Directors asked about the theory of action and what is the problem statement. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the opportunity gaps in regards to race and equity and the development of coherence to attack the problem. The PD offered would help identify and help teachers distinguish the difference types of problems each student faces in order to be better prepared to serve students. The effectiveness of teachers would also include making sure they have and use the right materials as well as providing PD to help strengthen their reach to students as well as culturally relevant practices.

Directors spoke about analyzing the student support system and the collaborative work and asked if CAI been the anchor of collaboration. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about two items: this point in time, it is best to describe the departments as co-convening. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the architecture of PD system, which is now much more coordinated and presentable.

Directors stated once again it would be helpful to have a problem statement and wanted to know if the main focus the opportunity gap. Dr. Kinoshita answers that is an umbrella over all their areas of focus but strengthening core instruction is the main need. Whether a student is a year behind or a year ahead and everything in between, how can staff best prepare teachers to support the student.

Directors asked about the current cultural competency of teachers. Dr. Kinoshita explained teachers are working tirelessly and heroically but we want them to be prepared to handle all types of opportunity gaps. By introducing more operative teaching strategies and culturally responsive practices to improve performance of students of color, the opportunity gap could be addressed more effectively. The core of teachers have had culturally responsive training and there is also a group of teachers that would benefit from more culturally responsive practices and training. The PD unification will help oversee that future trainings have some measure of culturally responsive practices. They will be a transformative factor as we have more encounters.

Directors stated they would like to see more researched based tools. Dr. Kinoshita explained PD selected and vetted would integrate with the tools in a systemic way, collaborating to build capacity. Directors stated it makes sense to build capacity and bring departments together.

Directors asked a clarifying question about mandated professional development and Dr. Kinoshita responded that there are optional courses. With consideration to every student, we are working on building our culture as a district. Dr. Kinoshita went on further to explain that the team is looking at schools and looking at how to best utilize the tools for each school, recognizing that it may vary from site to site.

Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the opportunities and threats in the SWOT analysis slide and spoke briefly about the instability of state and federal funding at this time. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about accomplishments in the ELA adoption and moving forward with the middle school math adoption.

Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the CAI staff organization on slide 11. He spoke about the shortage of the Director of CAI Systems and explained how staff members Dan Gallagher, Director of College and Career Readiness and Cashel Toner, Executive Director of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction, have had to step up and take on more roles to help fill in that role, all functioning at a high level of independence. The leadership capacity nearly exhausted out with the ethnic studies task force.

Ms. Cashel Toner spoke about the experiences of the managers who have pulled together to make a solid team and spoke about some of the goals of the CAI Department:

- Not only include core instruction but also includes areas such as arts and science to operationalize the professional development rollout.
- Instructional resources readily available and making sure teachers are responsive to the materials and take their feedback to help develop professional development.
- The professional development goal of June 1 course catalog that will aligned with CSIPS (Comprehensive School Improvement Plans) making sure the professional development also satisfies the school improvement plan.

- Assessment support and Request for Proposal (RFP) process

Directors asked about the goals and the timeline of each category. Dr. Kinoshita explained that while the goal is to partake in 30 minutes of arts and music at 100% of K-5 schools, only 30% of elementary schools are offering this option. Dr. Kinoshita went on further to explain that Seattle has had a checkered history of selecting PCP (Preparation, Conferencing and Planning) time and selections are limited. There is a “gold book” guide for principals to find PCP resources for the school if it comes up as opportunity; music should be first consideration followed by arts. Dr. Nyland stated that with support from the city, the partnership entices schools to be part of the art pathway by providing an extra PCP teacher (needs clarification). The district is working on reframing that FTE to PE or Arts and teachers are eager and ready to go. However, the funding for this position is an area the district looked at as a takeaway in order to balance the budget.

Directors spoke about principals asked how they wanted more direction to push the professional development. In moving forward, the next contract negotiation should help inform the stance we take on this request. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the system wide adoption, making sure every teacher gets professional development associated with influence from building principals. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about how we are moving forward with technology and how the district wants to incorporate that into learning. One of the developments modules is to have the professional development work collaboratively in a school building.

Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the Key Performance Indicators on slide 15 and wanted to provide some metrics in services we provide for adults, not students. Certain aspects of professional development is choice but we have to work in order to reach to teachers.

Directors asked about professional development being such a critical impact, which areas have the best educational outcomes for students and what is the feedback mechanism as we are building this PD system? Dr. Kinoshita spoke about tiered support throughout schools. Dr. Kinoshita explained that while we do not have capacity to meet 100% of schools, the department is currently looking at where schools have the highest need and what are targeted schools we can provide support for? Directors want to know what measure of effectiveness is and Dr. Kinoshita responded that this is something that we are researching.

Directors asked a question about technology in the classroom. The new buildings and classrooms are getting new technology. We talk about closing achievement gap but what about current schools and their lack of technology. What needs to happen to bring arts and technology into our schools? Dr. Kinoshita spoke about working with Chief Information Officer John Kroll to develop vision to see what technological education is about. What would be the appropriate role to support this vision?

Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the department budget and staffing overview on slide 16. Staff member Stephen Nielsen spoke about continuing using the comparative data and look at where the people are and where they are working so this confusing structure. Clarification around this subject will be published in the Friday memo.

Ms. Toner spoke about the benchmarking slide and explained how Seattle compares to other major cities. In response to a question from directors, Ms. Toner explains that slide 19 illustrates the curriculum adoption dates of other districts in Washington State.

Ms. Toner spoke about the policy and procedures that guide the work and how they all reflect policy 0030. Ms. Toner spoke about the internal and external controls that they often work with.

Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the major outside service contracts. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about technology systems. Directors asked about the Homeroom contract but Dr. Kinoshita explained no contract is in place because they are still testing with pilot schools.

Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the next steps of the CAI department. Opportunities to support core instruction, expansion of ethnic studies, and continuing partnerships.

Directors asked if we have requested help from the tribes for the mandated immemorial such as grants or support. Dr. Nyland spoke about the challenges and lack of any tribe directly associated with Seattle.

Directors asked about the interim assessment. Ms. Toner spoke about how the upcoming changes will be dependent on the RFP selection. Assessment Development Program Manager Megan Bale spoke about SEA involvement in the selection process and extending an invitation to them for all aspects. The final four vendors out of twelve proposals have completed the demo stage. A meeting with staff members on Friday will comb through data from these demos. Directors expressed interest in possibly viewing the vendor demo before it comes to the board for voting. Ms. Bale said it would be possible to arrange before it comes to the board for a vote. Ms. Bale also provided clarification about the vendors where some use a large item bank and others use a dummy test and noted that vendors are very aware and cautious about the visibility of the assessment.

Director burke asked about civics curriculum. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about looking out for supplemental resources.

This session recessed at 6:06pm.

Oversight Work Session: Special Education

This session began at: 6:18pm.

This meeting was staffed by Superintendent Larry Nyland, Chief of Student Support Services Wyeth Jessee, Director of Special Education Michaela Clancy, and Director of Special Education Patricia Campbell

Mr. Jessee introduced the directors and gave an update about what is happening in the department.

Mr. Jessee talked about the vision - where we came from to where we are today. He talked about the continuing shift to the culture, communities and schools - what it looks like and how it looks for achievement. Mr. Jessee also talked about the mission and the core values.

Mr. Jesse talked about the data management reporting systems; how the system has been and continues to improve. He talked about moving from oversight to changing the culture.

Dr. Clancy gave a synopsis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

Under accomplishments, Dr. Clancy and Mr. Jessee highlighted changes:

- Completing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
- Having had 4 citizen complaints but none active
- Initiating the paperless process for evaluations and individualized education programs (IEP)
- Initiating the writeback, (reduces the data entry by hand)

Ms. Campbell summarized hiring and recruitment – Currently, special education has approximately 485 teachers. The district has hired 80 teachers so far this year. In order to retain special education teachers, special education has started to provide an induction during the summer professional development options. Special education staff have attended hiring events in Michigan, Minnesota, and Oregon. She has an average of 5 teachers a week who want to come to Seattle.

Mr. Jessee talked about how there has been an improvement in the customer service rating with principals. The department has been retaining departmental central office staff. The department has been providing community support using parent partners – parents who work to help parents of students with IEPs understand special education services. Currently there are 12 parent partners, and we are looking for 4 more Somali, Spanish, and Chinese. The department provided training for the parent partners, including difficult conversations.

Director Blanford questioned the vision statement – Is the department function the department vision statement? What is the level of specificity? Seattle and Tacoma have been chosen by the Urban Collaborative to host the next conference. Who makes the choice for where the conference will be? Dr. Clancy explained that it is a national organization, and the advisory board looks at districts who are exemplar sites and then make a determination. Director Blanford stated that it is quite an accomplishment that we would be considered as a host site. Director Blanford also particularly noticed that the number of citizen complaints have dropped and remembers when there were so many.

Director Peters commented on remembering when Mr. Jessee was hired as the Executive Director of Special Education and that he should be proud of what has been accomplished. Director Peters inquired about how the disproportionality of students of color fits into the district's analysis, and what the district plans to do to change the outcomes.

Mr. Jessee noted that the achievement gap is still there for students with IEPs, but there is a reduced rate of students of color referred for behavioral services. There is still over qualification of Native American students, but it is more balanced than before. The hope is that Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) work will help to address these issues. Disproportionality tends to lead to qualification of special education students. The directors were asking why this disproportionality not in the SWOT analysis. Disproportionality should be more transparent.

Director Harris asked if professional development is required. Mr. Jessee said that for the summer institute they invite all of the teachers, and encourage the new teachers to come for induction. There is required training for compliance. The special education department cannot mandate the 56 hours of training for the Instructional Assistants (IAs). Seattle Education Association and the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) also cannot mandate that IAs attend the training.

A director asked about the role of the ombudsperson and what is the importance of this role. Ms. Campbell explained that this person has taken over 1200 calls from parents. She helps them to

understand a student's IEP, funnels calls to the proper person (parent partners, supervisors, program specialists). She also attends the regional meetings, and parent community meetings.

Director Peters asked for the information that was provided to parents and staff at the regional meetings to be summarized and get the feedback from those meetings provided in a future Friday Memo.

Director Peters noted that there has been changes in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) program and would like the updates to be in a future Friday Memo.

Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Mr. Tolley informed the board that they can require up to 24 hours of training, but have to pay additional time if they participate.

Director Harris wanted to clarify that it isn't that we cannot require training because of the CBA, but rather that we cannot afford it. Mr. Jessee said there is a tremendous cost for special education services, coupled with the law.

Mr. Jessee noted that there are staffing issues based on the continuum for special education placements; we cannot just shoehorn a student into a specific service type, we need to balance. There is the complexity of capacity, staffing, funding, and the fluidity of services and staff. One of the directors asked whether or not there was a way to work more closely with parents and communities to be more transparent about what and how students are assigned. Directors requested follow up on the student assignment plan in preparation for the 2017-18 school year.

It was asked if there are star mentors in Special Education. Dr. Clancy described the role of the Educational Staff Associate (ESA) Central Office Career Ladder positions in Occupational/Physical Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, and the School Psychologists. There are also 4 teachers that are building based.

Director Patu said that she remembers in the past when the whole focus was to get special education students into the general education. She felt that children used to be limited to only special education classes. She wanted to know when the idea to get special education students in to the general education classes changed. Mr. Jessee reminded the board that special education is a service not a place. Dr. Clancy described inclusion and the continuum of services on the student's IEP.

Director Geary left at 6:45. Director Blanford left at 7:08

Mr. Jessee then talked about the organizational chart; that there has been lots of retention within the department; that many people have been there for a long time. This department has over 400 people.

Director Harris mentioned about a year ago there was talk at a meeting about doing our own intensive services instead of farming out, and is wondering how far along in the process we are. Dr. Clancy said that we have reduced the contracts, but there are still students coming in to the district who need outside services

Director Patu was told by an IA who works in an elementary school that they are now having to move next year with the student who is rising from elementary to middle school. If the student is a 1:1 then the IA needs to move with the student. Mr. Jessee said that without knowing the specifics that he cannot answer with regards to this specific situation.

Director Pinkham wanted to know if the average cost/student is only for the special education portion, or does that include the general education cost. Services vary, so the costs can vary for students 30 minutes versus 300 minutes. When the cost only shows the average, it does not give a true picture of the cost. Dr. Clancy described the special education state and federal funding as well as the safety net funding. . Director Harris also requested a breakout of special education funding: general education, special education (both state and federal broken out) and safety net dollars.

Director Harris asked Dr. Clancy about the information for the Birth to 3 state funding changes; what are the service impacts and next steps with a possible partnership with the City of Seattle Department of Education Early Learning (DEEL) to get a grant to help offset some of the service losses.

Director Harris also asked for a summary of citizen complaints and due processes through the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

Adjourn

This meeting adjourned at 7:46pm.