

Board Special Meeting

School Board Retreat

Saturday, June 03, 2017 10:00am-3:00pm

Auditorium, John Stanford Center

2445 – 3rd Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134



Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 am. All directors were present.

Staff present were Superintendent Larry Nyland, Deputy Superintendent Stephen Nielsen, Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Michael Tolley, Associate Superintendent for Facilities & Operations Flip Herndon, Assistant Superintendent for Operations Pegi McEvoy, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Clover Codd, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance JoLynn Berge, Chief of Strategy and Partnerships Brent Jones, Chief Engagement Officer Carri Campbell, Chief of Schools Mike Starosky, Chief of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Kyle Kinoshita, Chief of Student Support Services Wyeth Jessee, Chief Information Officer John Krull, Executive Director of Government Relations & Strategic Initiatives Erinn Bennett, and Director of Policy & Board Relations Nate Van Duzer.

ICE BREAKERS

Staff and directors participated in icebreaker activities.

RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING: STEREOTYPE THREAT AND IDENTITY SAFETY

Director Peters introduced the presenters for the next section.

Dr. Jones provided some context on the District's work in creating learning environments that contribute to success for students of color. Dr. Kinoshita spoke about the connections between racial and cultural identity, the layers of cultural identity, and showed a 5 minute video about stereotype threat. He reviewed the long term effects of stereotype threat. He introduced guest presenter Dr. Stephanie Fryberg from the University of Washington.

Dr. Fryberg introduced and described the concept of identity safety. She discussed stereotypical narratives presented in culture. She noted the importance of creating a sense of belonging among students. She talked about independent models of self versus interdependent models of self, noting the predominance of the independent model in higher education and its effects on first-generation college students.

Dr. Fryberg discussed the importance of developing a culture of growth mindset (as opposed to fixed mindset), where traits like intelligence are treated like malleable qualities. She described the connections between growth mindset, academic self-view, positive classroom behaviors, and grades. She discussed the challenges with implementing sustainable growth mindset interventions. In conclusion, she discussed work with training teachers and helping them develop a framework that works for their classroom environments.

In response to a question from Director Blanford, she talked about the importance of empowering students with knowledge that helps overcome stereotypes.

At 12:12, the meeting broke for lunch.

BOARD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOAL REPORTS

The meeting reconvened at 12:35pm. Each director shared about community engagement activities undertaken in the last quarter, highlighting school visits, community events and conversations, and engagement with students.

STRATEGIC PLAN: PLANNING PROCESS OPTIONS

Ms. Bennett outlined the objectives for this conversation. In response to a question from Director Burke, Dr. Codd talked about the transition between the former plan and the current plan.

Ms. Bennett then walked through each option for strategic planning on the briefing paper, with directors offering additional feedback about pros and cons on each option. Directors questioned the timing of the options and noted upcoming leadership transitions, the importance of representative input, the challenges of a limited community engagement approach, and the differences between goals and strategies. Dr. Nyland and Director Patu spoke about the City of Seattle's education summit process. Directors also expressed concerns about starting new conversations about district direction in the current budget scenario. Director Burke offered an additional option.

Ms. Bennett noted the next steps necessary for continuing the conversation and the need for follow up in the fall.

EQUITY IN HIGHLY CAPABLE PROGRAMS

Director Peters introduced this section and the guest presenter, Austina De Bonte from the Northwest Gifted Child Association.

Ms. De Bonte provided an outline of the presentation and noted that equity in highly capable programs is a national problem. She provided local statistics about disproportional representation in these programs. She highlighted Federal Way as a district that has had success in achieving more proportional representation.

She noted outdated and biased identification practices as the first layer of problems for achieving equity in these programs, including referrals, English-language tests, testing outside of school time, group-administered tests, waiting until second grade, having hard cut off scores or using grades as criteria, relying on an appeals process to catch mistakes, once-a-year testing, not providing practice tests, and "public notice" style communications. Overall, she noted the system is designed to favor families who can navigate a complex system. She offered alternative practices that would provide more equitable outcomes.

Ms. De Bonte also identified equity in access issues, including transportation, students faced with being one of few students of color, teachers without training to serve Highly Capable students, and lack of teachers of color or cultural competence in the curriculum. For each barrier, she identified alternatives. She also highlighted lack of funding as an important issue, and that this funding is generally used for identification and professional development, not for creating a culturally responsive program.

She discussed the importance of serving highly capable kids, noting the importance of building grit in kids by challenging them. She cited some brain development and research in this area. She talked about social challenges for these children and concluded by stating how highly capable programs benefit the whole child. Director Geary asked about the recommended percentage size of the total student population for a specialized program.

The retreat was adjourned at 3:12 pm.