



Board Special Meeting

School Board Retreat

December 14, 2019 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Room 2750, John Stanford Center
2445 3rd Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98134

Minutes

Call to Order

Director DeWolf called the Board Special Meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Directors Mack, Hampson, Rivera-Smith, DeWolf, Hersey, Harris, and Rankin were in attendance.

Staff present were Superintendent Denise Juneau; Wyeth Jessee, Chief of Schools & Continuous Improvement; Dr. Mia Williams, Executive Director of African American Male Achievement; Dr. Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Concie Pedroza, Chief of Student Supports; Sheila Redick, Executive Director of HR Strategy and Operations; Lindsay Berger, Director of Professional Growth and Educator Support; Greg Narver, Chief Legal Counsel; Erinn Bennett, Executive Director of Government Relations & Strategic Initiatives; Carri Campbell, Chief of Public Affairs; Sherri Kokx, Senior Advisor to the Superintendent; JoLynn Berge, Chief Financial Officer; Fred Podesta, Chief Operations Officer; Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Chief of Equity, Partnerships and Engagement; and Ellie Wilson-Jones, Director of Policy and Board Relations.

Welcome and Icebreaker

Director DeWolf led introductions and then invited Dr. Williams and Dr. Scarlett to lead the Board in an icebreaker activity.

Dr. Scarlett spoke to work to align with the strategic plan, Seattle Excellence. Dr. Williams introduced the icebreaker activity. Directors and staff engaged in an icebreaker activity that included reflecting on a series of questions.

Dr. Williams led directors and staff in a “Snow Ball Activity” related to the first chapter of the book “We Dare Say Love” by Na’ilah Suad Nasir, Jarvis R. Givens, and Christopher P. Chatmon. Directors and staff shared quotes from the book that resonated with them and reflected on commitments.

Director DeWolf shared gratitude with Dr. Williams and Dr. Scarlett for grounding the work of the day.

Strategic Plan

Director DeWolf invited Superintendent Juneau to introduce the strategic plan discussion. Superintendent Juneau reviewed the strategic plan’s theory of action, four priorities, and three 2019-20 focus goals. She noted the 13 focus schools for 2019-20. Superintendent Juneau reviewed the anticipated timeline of key dates related to the strategic plan. She noted work to develop a revised data dashboard and district scorecard and spoke to changes to align to the strategic plan.

Dr. Williams provided an overview of the Department of African American Male Achievement and noted that hiring is underway for two manager positions. She reported that the Players’ Coalition has provided funding to support the work of the African American Male Student Leadership Council and

that the application process is underway. Ms. Kokx and Superintendent Juneau noted that districts across the country are looking to Seattle Public Schools as a leader on racial equity and have been reflecting on the strength of the strategic plan.

Director Hampson asked about the application process for the African American Male Student Leadership Council. Dr. Williams spoke to the application timeline and work underway to ensure that there are not barriers to participation for interested students. Dr. Williams noted that a stipend will be provided for participating students. Director Hampson asked if the students must be regularly attending school. Director DeWolf spoke to the criticality of the stories and perspectives and leadership that can be provided by students who have been pushed out of the system. Dr. Pedroza and Dr. Williams discussed cross-departmental work to reach students. Dr. Williams provided cards that speak to the Department of African American Male Achievement (AAMA) and the focus on culture, conditions, competencies, and community connections. Director Harris requested that cards be provided to directors.

Director Hampson asked about information sharing on social media. Ms. Campbell explained that additional information could be shared with directors.

Director Mack spoke to the challenges of being aware of all community engagement being done by the district. She stated that having a clearer map of the work would be helpful to the Board and will allow the Board to help share those opportunities. Director Mack noted she would share more during the discussion of Board Goals.

Dr. Williams spoke to information provided in the Friday Memo and resources available on the Department of African American Male Achievement website.

Superintendent Juneau reviewed the values and commitments that underly engagement and communications. Director Hampson asked about data for African American male students in other parts of the city outside of the 13 focus schools. Dr. Williams spoke to a map that had been developed and shared. Superintendent Juneau shared that 50 percent of K-3 African American male students attend the 13 focus schools. Director Hampson stated that she would like to receive additional information about the work of the district to serve the other 50 percent.

Dr. DeBacker spoke about the third grade English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency goal. She reported that only 28 percent of African American male students are reading at grading level and spoke to centering the work of the strategic plan on meeting early literacy benchmarks.

Ms. Campbell reviewed the Seattle Super Readers program, which was developed to support the third grade ELA goal, and which has relied on student voice. Director DeWolf requested that information about the program also be shared in the Friday Memo. Director DeWolf asked how superheroes were selected as the theme and noted the underrepresentation of people of color in comics. Ms. Campbell stated that superheroes were a focus of students and that students explained that they see themselves as being the superheroes.

Director Mack noted that there is an opportunity to partner with Seattle Public Library on library cards. She stated that there is a disconnect with high schools and asked about work to address the disconnect. Ms. Campbell spoke to work underway with the goal of giving all students a library card or access to city libraries. Director Mack asked about the third grade reading work group. Dr. DeBacker shared the organizations represented on the work group. Director Mack asked if the work group has a charter. Dr. DeBacker stated the group has a work plan.

Director Hersey spoke about providing electronic books. He asked that existing electronic resources be advertised.

Director Rankin spoke about a walking field trip to the library to sign students up for library cards.

Director Hersey asked about having library staff come to each of the 13 focus schools to get students signed up for library cards. Ms. Campbell noted that the schools will be visited regarding the summer reading program. She stated that work is underway to memorialize the work underway with the library.

Director Hampson asked about discussion of the budget as it relates to the work. She noted her skepticism about work that is funded outside of divisional budgets. Director Hampson and Ms. Campbell spoke about translations for the Seattle Super Readers program materials. Director Hampson asked about funding for supporting work in home languages. Ms. Campbell spoke about the overall \$15,000 budget for the Seattle Super Readers program and broader work of her division to support the strategic plan, including the creation of translated videos to reach families.

Director Mack stated that programmatically it feels that there is a disconnect between students that identify as English Language Learners and the Seattle Super Readers program.

Director Harris stated that 20 percent of students have undiagnosed dyslexia and asked about the work of the district to reach those students' needs through materials selection. Dr. Pedroza spoke about cross-departmental work by the Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education, and English Language Learners departments. Director DeWolf asked that information be provided to the Curriculum & Instruction Policy Committee. Director Mack stated that the C&I Policy Committee seems like an appropriate body to receive the information and requested a written report. She asked about planning and specific interventions. Dr. Pedroza spoke to development of general education to meet student needs.

Dr. DeBacker and directors continued discussion of work related to third grade reading. Dr. Scarlett discussed work to support family engagement efforts at the 13 focus schools. Director DeWolf noted information provided in the Friday Memo.

Dr. DeBacker cited accomplishments to date. Dr. DeBacker reviewed information about increases in ELA proficiency for African American males between third and fifth grades and spoke to the role of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports. Dr. DeBacker shared the annual targets for proficiency rates on the Smarter Balanced Assessments.

Director Rankin noted a question that arose during the December C&I Policy Committee meeting regarding SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words). Dr. DeBacker noted that SIPPS is available to all schools and that information would be provided. Director Rankin asked about the success of the tool. Director Rankin spoke about work to improve library collections.

Director Hersey asked about work with new educators to support the development of classroom libraries. Dr. DeBacker spoke to supports provided to new educators. Dr. Scarlett spoke to also building an explicit routine of how teachers use the libraries. Director DeWolf asked about onboarding. Dr. Scarlett stated that this is provided from the curriculum side.

Director Hersey asked about whether Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC) professional development is being utilized. Dr. DeBacker spoke about the professional development being provided for the 13 focus schools. Director Harris asked if the training is required and paid for. Dr. DeBacker stated that it is for the 13 focus schools. Dr. DeBacker spoke about providing training outside of the school day.

Director Hersey asked about backwards planning to support earlier grade reading instruction. Dr. Williams spoke about the importance of school leadership.

Director Mack asked about budget support. Director Hampson requested that budget information be provided throughout presentations. Director Hampson noted negative experiences with MTSS, which she stated has the effect of reducing student time with more experienced educators. She noted needing additional information on how MTSS is utilized effectively.

Director Harris stated that she has not heard about Directors of Schools and Continuous School Improvement Plans (C-SIPs) and operationalizing the work. She stated that she wants additional information.

Director DeWolf recessed the meeting for a lunch break at 12:34 p.m. Director DeWolf called the meeting back to order at 1:00 p.m.

Director Hersey noted that he is struggling to understand how the strategies are focused on African American boys rather than focused on 13 schools. He stated that the primary focus should be specifically on strategies and communicating to black families about the work that is being done to address the system of oppression.

Mr. Jessee noted the importance of history when discussing safe and welcoming schools. He spoke to being a site-based district and the challenges with addressing systemic issues. He discussed changing school culture by shifting adult beliefs and practices and the vision for the work. Mr. Jessee spoke to mentorship and care-coordination and the importance of providing supports that address students' risk factors.

Director Harris requested a list of schools for the work related to coordination and the membership of the work group. Mr. Jessee reviewed the membership of the work group and spoke to the power of student voices in the work related to safe and welcoming schools. He reviewed work that has been accomplished. Mr. Jessee also reviewed the targets related to safe and welcoming schools and current data regarding attendance and discipline incidents.

Director Hampson noted that attendance and discipline incidents are dropping together. She spoke about students being removed from learning environments and questioned the tracking of such removals. Mr. Jessee spoke about the implementation of a missed instructional log, which records when students are not in class. Director Hampson asked about accountability. Mr. Jessee spoke about training, monitoring, and the use of the data within a school-site. Mr. Jessee stated that students are likely not attending school in some cases because of a lack of engagement and spoke to the need to address this. Dr. Williams spoke about the logging of information related to students being out of the classroom. Director Hampson stated that she believes there are incidences of students being removed from class without this information being logged. Dr. Williams spoke about the use of this information by schools to improve their practices.

Director Mack reflected that the students are our kids and the responsibility is to them not just one day but over time. She asked whether there is a districtwide program of intentionally reaching out and supporting students who need supports. She stated that the program does not currently exist but should be considered.

Director Rankin spoke about the enthusiasm of some building leaders in improving their building culture and noted interest in whether there is a correlation in student climate data and information related to discipline. She spoke to the need for accountability for building leadership. Director Rankin spoke about deficit-based interactions with the truancy department and need for course correction to be based on an offer of supports.

Mr. Jessee invited directors to visit school sites with him and spoke to the strong work of schools and efforts to build that capacity district-wide.

Director Hampson noted that too much information was being scheduled for the available time. She spoke to the need to have questions answered in order to share the work of the district with community members. Director DeWolf suggested that questions be provided to Board Office staff and that an additional work session may be appropriate. Director Hampson noted the need for more dialog and suggested directors provide questions to staff in advance.

Director DeWolf spoke about the relationship to the Board's Goals.

Ms. Redick reviewed work related to culturally responsive professional practice and the work group representatives. She spoke to existing work and utilizing the resources created by the Equity & Race Advisory Committee, African American Male Advisory Committee, and NAACP Youth Coalition.

Ms. Berger discussed the foundational beliefs and updates incorporated based on work group feedback. Ms. Berger reviewed initiatives including culturally responsive teaching practices, the teacher leadership cadre, and work of Building Leadership Teams; (BLTs) work accomplished to date; and relevant targets. Director Harris asked about funding for research and evaluation. Ms. Berger spoke about partnership with the University of Washington. Dr. DeBacker noted the work is included in the research and evaluation plan reviewed by the Board.

Director Harris noted a longstanding concern related to BLTs and asked about relevant collective bargaining agreement language and whether it requires that community members be included. She asked about student voice and asked for a list of which schools have community members on the BLTs.

Director Hersey asked how the information directly ties to student outcomes. Ms. Berger spoke to ongoing work with research and evaluation to identify potential indicators related to student outcomes. Dr. Scarlett spoke about work with school leaders to take up strategies to support the growth of practice in the classroom. Superintendent Juneau spoke to work to give staff and families more tools and opportunities to observe and incorporate feedback.

Director Hampson spoke about Since Time Immemorial (STI). Director Hampson spoke about the need to admit when damage is being done. Director Hampson stated that she was concerned about the lack of understanding of STI. Dr. DeBacker spoke about professional development being provided to middle school teachers and noted the update provided to the Curriculum and Instruction Policy Committee. Director Hampson questioned why STI had been left out of the materials presented.

Director Harris stated that it is related to where we choose to live our values and the need to send resources there.

Director Hampson spoke to the need to be familiar with the origins of the work. Director DeWolf stated that there is an opportunity for the Board to show leadership through an STI training to create a common understanding.

Director Mack stated that that the presentation was not moving according to the timeline included on the agenda. Director DeWolf spoke to the way in which the remainder of the time would be utilized.

Mr. Podesta spoke about connections between the operations goal to other strategic plan goals and relationships to work related to two Board task forces on community workforce agreement and capacity management. Mr. Podesta spoke about initiatives related to transportation and cross-departmental work to begin to establish a work group. He noted work to develop 2020-21 transportation standards that are more informed by racial equity analysis. He spoke about targets related to transportation and work to date to improve transportation services. He noted a pilot of the FirstView app to improve communications with families.

Director Harris asked when the app pilot will begin and asked, with respect to retention efforts, whether split-shift drivers could be co-employed at schools as playground staff and other positions. Mr. Podesta stated that the drivers are not district employees and stated that it was unclear that retention would be improved given the market for commercial drivers. Ms. Berge spoke to statewide and national issues related to driver retention. Mr. Podesta spoke about improving technology to ensure that turnover is not as disruptive.

Director Rankin asked about changing the contractual relationship to contract for buses and potentially employ drivers. Director Rankin suggested a change to the title of the Transportation Service Standards.

Mr. Podesta spoke about early learning pathways and designing buildings that support early learners. Mr. Podesta explained that the current standards for building design are focused on K-12 needs. Director Harris asked, as a rhetorical question, whether the city would provide capital funding. Director Mack noted that the city does not provide funding.

Ms. Berge spoke about 2019-20 strategic plan funding by source and reviewed how the funding is broken down by initiative.

Director Mack asked for more information about what the funding is being spent on rather than at the initiative level. Ms. Berge stated that additional information could be provided during a budget work session. Ms. Berge stated that moving into 2020-21, more funding will be needed for the strategic plan implementation. She stated that the district is in a position to do so and that this will be discussed with the Board during the upcoming work session.

2020 Board Committee & Liaison Assignment Preferences

Ms. Wilson-Jones reviewed the list of Board Committee and liaison positions and Board Policy No. 1240, Committees.

Each director shared preferences for 2020 Board Committee and Liaison assignments for Board President DeWolf to take into account in making assignments.

2020 Board Goals

Ms. Wilson-Jones reviewed Board Policy Nos. 1810, Annual Goals & Objectives, and 1820, Evaluation of the Board, and spoke to the process utilized by the Board in 2019 to adopt goals and evaluate the Board's work toward those goals. Director DeWolf reviewed the three goals adopted by the Board for 2019 and spoke about the evaluation process.

Director DeWolf spoke about relating Board goals to the strategic plan and the theory of action that underlies the strategic plan.

Director DeWolf asked Director Hampson to synthesize the suggested Board goals for the development of a Board Action Report for review by the Executive Committee.

Director DeWolf invited directors to share suggested 2020 Board goals.

Director Mack suggested a goal related to community engagement and stated that it would be helpful to have the Board understand the district's various stakeholder groups and advisory committees and the work done by those bodies. Director DeWolf asked for clarification on how the goal would be focused on work for the Board versus identifying a task for staff. Director Mack stated that a work session or retreat could be planned with information shared with the Board at that time. She noted that the directors could work to gather the information. Director Harris suggested that the information could be provided to the Board Office for sharing during a Work Session. Director Rankin asked about the purpose of the suggested goal. Director Mack stated that the work would allow the Board to understand what already exists. Superintendent Juneau noted that the proposed goal consists of a request for information rather than an active goal. Director Rivera-Smith stated that a goal could be framed more broadly, as the Board being more in tune with the community and noted that information is available on the Board website regarding stakeholder bodies. Director Mack noted that she agrees with the framing suggested by Director Rivera-Smith of a broader goal related to community engagement.

Director Hampson spoke to a Board goal related to community engagement and suggested the following goals: create a pro-Black agenda; decolonize practice; under community engagement, improve communication with the community so that it is equitable and effective; expand Board utilization of math; revisit critical Board processes and functions to analyze for racial equity and necessary restructuring; create a Board work plan consistent with strategic plan; and partner more strategically with government and community partners at the state and local level.

Director Rivera-Smith suggested the full Board mobilize to do more advocacy.

Director Hersey suggested that the Board complete a training on Ethnic Studies, create a pro-Black agenda, align community engagement with a map of where black boys attend school, and restructure and redefine relationships with the city and Legislature.

Director Harris suggested continued racial equity training for the Board. She requested more timely and robust communication from senior staff and regarding committee work products and stated that this could be a combined goal with staff. She noted wanting committee minutes more promptly and stated that Board-staff communication work has been high-centered and needs to be addressed.

Director Rankin suggested collaborating on advocacy with Board directors from other districts and also suggested revising all Board policies and updating or sunseting policies as appropriate. Director Mack noted her agreement with reviewing and updating Board policies and stated that this work was

not taking place. Director Harris stated that the Board is updating policies and requested that the Board be provided with a spreadsheet of the date policies were last updated. Director Hampson spoke to the ongoing role of the Board to set policy for the district and stated that she sees annual goals as focusing on the work of the Board that is a specific focus for that year. Director Rankin stated that ongoing policy work should indeed be a focus for each year but that the work has not been done. Director DeWolf noted staff work related to policy.

Director Rankin noted that community engagement had been suggested but that specific goals have not been attached to Director engagement. Director Harris asked for clarification on whether Director Rankin was referring to engagement by individual directors or by the Board as a whole. Director Rankin noted that she was referring to both and stated that there is nothing that would require a Director to hold community meetings.

Director DeWolf suggested goals related to Since Time Immemorial training and considering a process by which the Executive Committee reviews individual committee work plans and provides a cohesive review of the district's policy work. Director Harris stated the goal could be to review and/or align work plans.

Director DeWolf spoke to additional suggested goals including holding additional work sessions outside of the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence, having Board directors work through the racial equity analysis tool in a committee or other context, auditing school name origins and developing a process to support communities in changing school names, considering the process by which work sessions are selected to ensure they align with the district's work and are not one-offs, and working with the Executive Committee on how Regular Board meetings and work sessions are conducted.

Director Hampson suggested a board versus staff softball game, and Director DeWolf confirmed that the request was for a social activity.

Ms. Bennett summarized the discussion by the Board regarding process and confirmed with directors that Director Hampson will be the designee to bring forward ideas for 2020 Board goals to the Executive Committee. Ms. Bennett suggested that Director Hampson could reach out to directors who had suggested each idea and bring forward a spreadsheet or other summary of the ideas and proposed performance measures to the Executive Committee in January. It was discussed that the Executive Committee could discuss in January what the timeline would be for advancing a Board Action Report to the full Board and whether an additional meeting of the full Board would first be needed.

Adjourn

Director DeWolf provided concluding remarks and adjourned the Board Special Meeting at 3:04 p.m.