

# Board special meeting



2445 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, Seattle WA 98124

Work Session: Preschool; Work Session: Budget; Executive Session: Labor Negotiation, Evaluate the Performance of a Public Employee  
Wednesday, January 25, 2017 4:30-8: 30pm  
Auditorium, John Stanford Center

## Minutes

### 1. Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 4:32 pm.

All Directors were present.

### 2. Work Session: Preschool

This session was staffed by Superintendent Dr. Larry Nyland, Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Michael Tolley, and Executive Director of Curriculum Instruction and Support Cashel Toner

Mr. Tolley thanks directors for 2x2 meetings regarding the work of preschool and their input. Ms. Toner spoke about the preschool program as a strategy to eliminate opportunity gaps that aligns with Seattle Public Schools' (SPS) core mission of helping students reach their full potential. Ms. Toner explained that the work session will be broken down into three sections: the task force and the recommendations, status report surrounding the current eight classrooms, and next steps and opportunities.

Ms. Toner discussed the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) timeline. Ms. Toner moved through the presentation and introduced the work of the task force. She explained the task force met from May to December of 2016 to discuss various subjects as listed in the Preschool Task Force Meeting Agenda Topics on slide 6 such as funding, inclusion, outreach, continuum of services. Ms. Toner spoke about the final task force recommendations and the four key declarations: Statement of Intended Services, Community Outreach Statement, Inclusion (Continuum of Services) Statement, and Financial Statement. Ms. Toner also spoke about national exemplars in the work of preschool inclusion. This national exemplar information included staffing ratios, average number of students in classrooms, and percentages of students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Director Pinkham asked whether the staffing model of the national exemplar sites use a staffing model. Ms. Toner answered they are FTE staff.

Director Harris asked about the daytime meetings of the task force, and if this schedule presented any difficulties for members' participation. Ms. Toner responded that task force members took a survey to find a collective meeting time with consideration to morning meetings, evening meetings, and weekend meetings and the majority consensus was to hold meetings during the day during business hours. Director Harris expressed that she appreciates consensus but would also like to consider the needs of the minority as well.

Director Blanford asked for details about the cities listed on the national exemplar page.

Ms. Toner spoke about the SPP Levy introduced by Mayor Ed Murray and its approval by Seattle voters in 2014 as well as the SPP Action Plan that describes the demonstration project and core guiding principles. The action plan quality indicators are evidence based practices and acknowledge that program quality is vital to successes of program. Ms. Toner directed the conversation to the current "Landscape of Preschool in SPS Buildings" on slide 11.

Ms. Toner talked through each of the three maps on slide 12. Ms. Toner explained that some sites overlap. For example, Highland Park has one classroom run and operated by SPS SPP and one classroom run and operated as a community-based organization (CBO) SPP.

Director Harris asked if CBO staff are represented by SEA and the benefits available to employees if not. Ms. Toner answered they are potentially compensated differently.

Ms. Toner presented slide 13, SPP family satisfaction surveys last year for Bailey Gatzert, Original Van Asselt, and Van Asselt. Although it did not yield a high return rate (36/155 responses), the responses collected all reflected 100% satisfaction.

Ms. Toner spoke about slides 15-18 concerning the diversity of the classroom, income of the families, multi-lingual population, and students with IEPs. SPS SPP is generally serving racially diverse students. In regards to income, one of the efforts was to push for a mixed income classroom. This varies by site but the classrooms are mixed income, and included several students and families who are multi-lingual. The data reflected in slide 18 reflects only the SPS SPP classrooms.

Director Peters wanted to know how many CBO SPP students have IEPs. Ms. Toner responded that about 7% of preschool students receive SPED services. The national context is about 6% of preschool students receive SPED services as charted on slide 19.

Ms. Toner showed preschool assessment data from fall 2015-16 school year and compared it to the preschool assessment completed later during the spring. Students showed growth in all six developmental areas. Ms. Toner pointed out that Bailey Gatzert has better scores because this site has one more year of experience than Original Van Asselt and Van Asselt.

Director Peters asked for similar growth data for Head Start and other preschool programs.

Ms. Toner spoke about the Programmatic Milestones from 2015-16 that illustrate deadlines and completion dates. The SPS SPP Programmatic Milestones for 2016-2017 are currently on track for completion.

Director Blanford asked Ms. Toner to explain the financial implications if these milestones are met or not met. Ms. Toner explained the SPS SPP funding model where 75% of total funds is the base allocation and the other 25% is programmatic milestone payment, with grant funds set aside to insure against any potential risks. The SPS SPP has met all programmatic milestones and is currently at full funding (100%).

Ms. Toner explained slide 25, showing the breakdown of one SPP classroom budget with the help of Superintendent Nyland. Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance, JoLynn Berge, explained that the \$51,000 grant funds go into a reserve account to mitigate potential shortfalls or carry over for future programming.

Director Harris clarified that the 25% grant funding/milestone allocation has indirect costs taken out and asked what indirect rate is being applied. Ms. Berge answered yes, they are using all updated numbers for staff costs and the program is on track; the projected indirect rate for next year went from 0 to 8%. Ms. Toner mentioned that her team has been working closely with the budget department to manage the 8%.

Director Blanford cautioned about how being caught up in numbers but can distract from a focus on the achievements such as reaching performance measures to ensure 100%.

Director Peters raised questions regarding the grant that helps cover the 25% programmatic milestone payment and what the status of the grant is since the grant is in the third year of a three-year grant. Ms. Toner explained that since the grant had a bit of a delay getting started, it is still available. Ms. Toner also noted that she has recently met with the foundation and discussed what the future may look like and how they can work towards continuation.

Director Peters asked how certain costs are measured such as shared resources . Ms. Berge answered that with consideration to the shared resources, those types of costs are factored in. Each year, staff have gotten better at analyzing and including these types of costs. Ms. Toner added that there is a line item that compensates the school nurse and office staff. For example, if a preschool family seeks help from the office, the office administrative staff will help the family. There is also a line item for the library and other costs calculated based on site and type of resource. The attempt was to build the budget to account for all types of cost; even supply money that goes to the school so preschool teachers can use resources such as copier or paper and also funds to help create an inclusive experience not only for the students, but for the school as well.

Director Patu spoke about the expenses of the program. She said these preschool students are being prepared for kindergarten in a Seattle Public School and become future students, thus the expenses are well spent.

Director Peters spoke about the expansion of the mandate from K-12 to PreK-12. Director Burke wanted to understand the organization, alignment, and capacity of principal staff. Ms. Toner explains that the principals at each site conducts the interviews, hiring process, and evaluations for the teacher and instructional assistant. The first year was a shared responsibility between Ms. Toner and the principal, but this year the responsibility has shifted onto the principals.

Director Blanford spoke about the educational impact that preschool has on early learners. Since these students are well schooled, they are less likely to become part of the opportunity gap and high quality preschool is the most potent gap closing method.

In response to a question, Mr. Tolley spoke about the fade-out that occurs in students during third grade where this is recognized and there needs to be a strategy to take them further in their educational career. Director Burke requested that fade-out monitoring tools for the future.

Director Burke also asked about information regarding the retention rates of SPS SPP students and the enrollment process. Ms. Toner responded that enrollment process is completed by the City of Seattle. The first year Bailey Gatzert students were grandfathered into the program. In the second year, the City of Seattle aligned the enrollment process to reflect SPS enrollment. Director Blanford asked about enrollment triggers for CBOs. Ms. Toner responded that CBO students are enrolled by the City of Seattle as well to ensure consistency.

Superintendent Nyland spoke about the levy portion. The city has large investments of finances and data into this program and are even measuring social emotional learning. The data sharing agreement has also benefited the renewal of this levy and shows the positive impact. Ms. Toner spoke about the future of the SPS SPP program and future opportunities. Some of the opportunities include continuation of the current eight classrooms, conversion of four SPP classrooms to the inclusion model, conversion of two Head Start classrooms to full day, and/or limited expansion of 3-10 additional SPS SPP classrooms. Director Geary spoke about the inclusion and results of the task force. Director Geary stated the items that she would like to look more closely at. Director Geary noted she would like to see specific language to follow inclusion model. Ms. Toner spoke about the current revisions and additions about providing high quality inclusion. These conversations are happening and will be presented during the executive committee with input from this work session as well.

Director Patu wanted to know the benefits of converting two Head Start classrooms. Ms. Toner explains how preschool time is measured in “dosage” and it would be built on the Head Start foundation, just supplementing the second half of the day with SPP funding to maximize Head Start potential. Ms. Toner also clarified that it would look more like stacking the funding as opposed to converting the program.

Director Burke asked about the contract language with the city and whether that proposes any challenges to the blending and braiding of funds or if it creates any restrictions. Ms. Toner stated that the programmatic milestones are built on current high quality Head Start program and it would run parallel to the current model.

Director Blanford spoke about expanding at an attainable rate to ensure high quality work.

This session ended at 5:48pm.

### **3. Work Session: Budget (Discussion and/or Action)**

This meeting reconvened at 6:01pm.

This session was staffed by Superintendent Nyland, Asst. Superintendent JoLynn Berge, and Deputy Superintendent Stephen Nielsen.

Supt. Nyland started the session with an update on the Levy Cliff extension bill in the State Legislature, describing how it passed in the House and has moved to the Senate. He reviewed that the District budget gap is composed of the levy cliff and a lack of adequate compensation provided by the state. In total, he stated that \$71 million of the \$74 million gap is due to the state not fulfilling its responsibility.

Ms. Berge highlighted that the desired outcome for this meeting is to finalize the worst case scenario budget and to begin developing priorities for restoration. She reviewed the consensus reached to date by the Board to close the budget gap down to \$11 million. She noted her appreciation for staff and labor partner participation in developing the recommendations for reductions in Weighted Staffing Standards (WSS). Mr. Nielsen added a note that budget numbers fluctuate slightly over time based on actual expenditures and revenues, so the \$74 million figure might change slightly in the coming months.

Ms. Berge reviewed the timeline for budget development. Mr. Nielsen and Ms. Berge noted that the Legislature might not take timely action, but that staff would give the Board a budget to approve by August 2.

Ms. Berge reviewed four questions raised during the last session, as highlighted in the presentation. She noted the list of unfunded mandates was updated with edits from Dir. Peters this afternoon. Dir. Peters noted that she thought the estimate for assessment costs was too low with the cost of technology; Ms. Berge noted this figure, as with other figures here, is a work in progress. Dir. Blanford asked if this list had been shared with the District lobbyist; staff responded that they will do so.

Ms. Berge reviewed a slide with two peer districts outside of the state, Boston and San Francisco. She reviewed the methodology staff used for looking for reductions. Mr. Nielsen noted that the amount of Federal funding that the District receives continues to trend downwards. Ms. Berge noted that the cost of keeping a building vacant would be capital costs.

Ms. Berge reviewed the components of the \$11.5 million in funding for curriculum adoption and presented options for phasing in a new K-5 English Language Arts curriculum. It was clarified that the dollars listed included professional development.

Dir. Burke asked if the proposed vendor had been queried about honoring similar unit prices if the curriculum was phased in and staff responded that the unit prices were unknown.

Dir. Harris invited Assoc. Superintendent Michael Tolley to the table to have a larger conversation about the question between curriculum and staff. Mr. Tolley noted that the costs listed for different phase in options have been vetted with the vendor. He noted the challenges faced by a lack of up-to-date curriculum, but also emphasized that having the individual teachers present in the classroom to help students was also very important. Dir. Blanford stated that he felt this was an either-or question and asked about the worst case scenario moving forward.

Ms. Berge noted that if there are cuts other than curriculum for the final \$11 million, the cuts would have to come from staff. She also noted that, if the Legislature doesn't act, the deficit for the following year could be even worse. Mr. Nielsen noted that other districts would be in the same position. He explained that if school districts cannot balance a budget in years to come, they would enter into binding conditions and lose budget decision-making authority to the local Educational Services District. Dir. Blanford emphasized that we could be looking at a larger deficit the following year.

Dir. Burke noted that we have to provide educators and provide them with infrastructure like curriculum and professional development and that cutting either has effects on students and core instruction. He noted the rate of school days being provided by substitutes, and highlighted the importance of providing them – or new teachers – with quality materials. He stated that if the District cannot afford instructional materials, it cannot afford MTSS or assessments. Dir. Geary noted her agreement with Dir. Burke and that materials are important for self-starting students in environments where teachers may have to focus on other students. Ms. Berge also noted, in response to Dir. Burke's comment, that the already approved WSS reductions are also cuts to core instruction.

Dir. Peters noted that she is not interested in cutting more teachers and that she has questions about whether there are other reductions that could occur in central administration.

Ms. Berge reviewed other potential sources of funding for curriculum adoption, including capital funds for new schools and Title I and LAP funds for those schools, which could cover up to around 30 elementary schools if those schools identified K-5 ELA adoption in their schoolwide plans. Dir. Blanford asked whether discretion would be taken from school leaders about how they want to use Title I funding. Ms. Berge noted that some Title I funding that is rolled over would be used by the District, not individual schools, and emphasized that there are always tradeoffs in funding decisions. She noted a similar dynamic for middle schools.

Dir. Harris asked what math curriculum would be provided for the two new middle schools. Mr. Tolley responded that the new schools would not be required to buy the current designated materials and would in fact be encouraged to use the waiver process.

Ms. Berge then walked through a potential consensus option for filling the remaining \$11.1 million gap, starting with the \$5 million in unallocated curriculum (part 1). Dir. Harris noted that this unallocated funding often gets reallocated. Mr. Nielsen noted that this is a problem that the state created. Dir. Patu asked for clarification about whether these funds come from the current year or the following year. Staff responded that, of the \$5 million in the 16-17 year budget, \$200,000 has been spent on the K-5 ELA adoption, and that there is \$5 million in unallocated funds for the 17-18 budget.

Ms. Berge highlighted that the District is hoping to get at least \$20 million from the state and that the K-5 ELA adoption could be prioritized in the list of items that get funded with any additional dollars, but if the District doesn't even get that much, there would be many problems all across the district.

Dir. Patu noted the importance of protecting staff positions over funding curriculum. Ms. Berge emphasized that all the staff recommendations were made through the lens of equity and what is best for the students.

Dir. Geary thanked staff for the work to find creative solutions for curriculum funding and noted her comfort with the recommendation to use the \$5 million for school year 2017-18, which is unallocated, to help close the final gap. Dir. Peters noted her comfort with this recommendation as well. Dir. Burke noted his comfort as well and asked about the history of these funds. Linda Sebring, Budget Director, noted that the \$5 million annual allocation started in the 14-15 budget year. Ms. Berge, noting consensus being reached, moved onto the next piece in filling the \$11.1 million gap: middle school math. She noted the recommendations detailed in the presentation, reserving \$200,000 to continue middle school math adoption and using the remaining \$1.8 million to help fill the gap, with its priority on the restoration list to be determined.

Dir. Blanford asked if a Title I school principal could have the school's Title I funding allocation be used for curriculum adoption in their school when they would rather spend this funding on other priorities. Ms. Berge said this could happen, but is unlikely. Dir. Blanford asked for the staff recommendation regarding the other flexible sources of funds. Ms. Berge responded that staff would be using the same lenses that have already been used for priorities for budgeting.

Dir. Harris asked if a waiver process could be an out for a Title I principal who wants to use Title I funds on something other than new curriculum. Mr. Tolley noted that waivers have generally not been allowed for the first year of new curriculum.

Dir. Harris noted her comfort with the recommendation to put aside \$200,000 for middle school math in the worst case scenario, emphasizing the importance of the restoration conversations.

Ms. Berge noted the recommendation that the last of the \$11.1 million would come from \$4.8 of the K-5 ELA adoption, but that this funding could be prioritized high in the restoration list. She noted two possible scenarios for starting the first \$20 million of the restoration list, with a K-5 ELA adoption in each scenario, in addition to any funding that could come from capital dollars.

Mr. Nielsen reiterated that the current situation is highly unfortunate. He highlighted the values the District would use in prioritizing the list for funding restoration. He noted a couple possible scenarios of action from the Legislature.

Ms. Berge summarized the three elements of filling the \$11.1 million gap and asked for director feedback.

Dir. Burke asked if the finance office would allow the formal start of a middle school math adoption process with the \$200,000 and Ms. Berge said yes. Dir. Burke also reiterated his support for the language arts adoption and asked how the current year funding is moved forward to the future year funding. Ms. Berge said there may be some more information available by May, when the decision is to be made on the K-5 ELA adoption for next year.

Dir. Peters asked for consensus on the \$5 million unallocated for next year, and Directors agreed.

Dir. Pinkham and staff clarified that the \$4.8 million in this year's budget for K-5 ELA could be carried forward to help fill the next year's budget.

Dir. Peters asked for consensus around the \$200,000 for math moving forward and there were no objections.

Dir. Blanford asked if these decisions led to cash being spent on items other than staff. Mr. Nielsen replied by saying the \$200,000 for math is the only piece that would continue to be allocated in curriculum. Dir. Blanford reiterated his support for prioritizing staff.

Staff clarified that the numbers for restoration scenarios are not finalized and the plans presented are placeholders.

Dir. Peters asked if Ms. Berge had the answers she needed. She stated that she heard consensus to prioritize the K-5 ELA adoption funding in the restoration plan and Directors expressed agreement.

Dir. Peters announced that the third oversight work session would be deferred to another time and be rescheduled to another time and apologized to the staff for the inconvenience.

This session ended at 7:45pm.

Dir. Peters then recessed the Board into Executive Session, with an anticipated end time of 8:30pm.

**4. Executive Session: Labor Negotiations, Evaluate the Performance of a Public Employee**

Director Peters called the executive session to order at 7:46 PM.

Directors Blanford, Burke, Geary, Harris, Patu, Peters, & Pinkham were present.

Staff present: Superintendent Nyland, Deputy Superintendent Stephen Nielsen, Executive Director of Labor & Employee Relations Stand Damus, and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Clover Codd.

At 8:30 PM, Director Peters recessed out of the executive session.

The Special Meeting reconvened at 8:30 PM and there being no further business to come before the Board, Director Peters adjourned the special meeting at 8:31 PM.