

# Board Special Meeting

2445 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134



Oversight Work Sessions: Enrollment Services/Assignment;  
Oversight Work Session: Enrollment Planning;  
Executive Session: to Evaluate the Performance of a Public Employee  
Tuesday, March 21, 2017 4:30-8:00pm  
Auditorium, John Stanford Center

## Minutes

### Call to Order

Director Sue Peters called the meeting to order at 4:30. Directors Harris, Pinkham, Patu, Blanford, Geary, and Burke were present.

Staff present included Superintendent Nyland, Faauu Manu (Manager of Enrollment Services), Ashley Davies (Director of Enrollment Planning), and Dr. Flip Herndon (Associate Superintendent of Capital and Facilities).

### Oversight Work Session: Enrollment Services/Assignment

Dr. Herndon provided an overview of the agenda. Ms. Manu introduced herself and gave a history of the Enrollment Services department over the last four years, highlighting changes and the conscious effort to put the student first and collaborate across departments. Ms. Manu noted that three years ago, 65-70% of families enrolling children would enroll in person, and now it is the other way around, where 65-70% of our registration packets come in online because there is now a trust that has been built between the public. She noted the importance of building trust through concerted outreach efforts and building relationships – especially to our ELL and underserved families, and the assistance provided by Dr. Herndon along the way.

Ms. Manu then discussed the F1 (International) student program. She noted the previously closure of this program, a thorough review, and its reopening with higher fees to be more revenue driven. With help from the Accounting department, Enrollment Services was able to raise the price of international tuition from \$8,000 to \$12,000. Ms. Manu also noted the Admissions fair and thanked Director Harris for attending. She also stated that this year we had many other schools that are alternative options present at the fair, which made it easier for parents to get informed about different styles of learning.

Ms. Manu noted that Enrollment Services takes responsibility for identifying ELL students as well as underserved students, including unaccompanied youth, homeless students, sanctioned students etc.

She noted that customer service also falls under the umbrella of Enrollment Services, including the employees who manage the lobby desk and serve as the first point of contact for people entering the building. Moving into the S.W.O.T. Analysis, Ms. Manu emphasized that Admissions has improved operational efficiency. As a result, they have received 8,000 fewer calls this year, an improvement due to higher levels of education among families about the process. Recurrent staff trainings are ongoing. Admissions staff are able to respond to the parent with a school assignment at least within a 72-hour time period.

Ms. Manu highlighted technology as a weakness of the department, noting the current manual nature of the system. Staff is working with DOTS on how to make the process more efficient and is also looking at the system for tracking complaints. She also highlighted summer staffing as another. The Admissions staff includes both 260-Day FTE and 223-Day FTE employees, which can be troublesome when the 223's leave the office as a majority of them are bi-lingual facilitators.

Ms. Manu noted all of the weaknesses are also opportunities for improvement for the Admissions office. She mentioned that she is currently in the process of redefining job descriptions within the department to form a more cohesive and accountable unit. In reviewing department accomplishments, Ms. Manu reiterated that operational efficiency is very much improved. The department has received positive feedback from parents about service at the admissions counter, including during peak times.

Ms. Manu discussed the re-opening of the F1 visa program and the revenue that it has brought to SPS within the last three years as another accomplishment. This year has seen about \$950,000 in revenue for the whole program, as the program increases in popularity. Another improvement noted was the reduction OSPI hearings for non-resident students from 20 to two on average annually, due to the provision of counter offers to these students rather than simply denying outright the school that non-resident students request. In reviewing the organizational chart, Ms. Manu noted that on September 1, 2016, the department was reassigned to operate under Enrollment Planning.

Ms. Manu then described the department goals and objectives for Admissions, including creating an automated system online for registration paperwork re-modeling the customer service data system, and ongoing targets to further decrease in-person and phone wait times. Ms. Manu emphasized the goal of improving outreach by engaging with specific underserved and ELL communities through collaboration with ELL and Early Learning in hosting outreach events. Ms. Manu then opened the floor for questions from the school board.

Director Patu asked for more detail about the F1 program. Ms. Manu explained that F1 visas are for students who want to come to America for high school and that it is a tuition based program, noting the difference from the J1 visa where students come here to experience the culture for one academic year with no tuition. Director Geary complimented the department's work and made one comment, noting that the measures highlighted in one slide could be better defined. Director Blanford reiterated the praise for Ms. Manu's work, emphasizing the shorter lines at the admissions counter. He asked for more detail as to why fewer phone calls were evidence of efficiency. Ms. Manu responded that staff tally the calls that come in, have worked hard to anticipate and answer questions at the front end, and have created videos and other resources for families to access before calling with a question. Director Burke asked about potential redundancy between departments on interpretation and translation; Ms. Manu responded that departments actively collaborate together. Director Burke also made comments about how technology is continually cited as an obstacle by departments and urged district-wide solutions when possible. Ms. Manu noted coming improvements in this area. Director Patu noted concerns about ensuring families have access to technology-based avenues and Ms. Manu noted steps taken to address these concerns.

Ms. Manu then provided an overview of the budget and staffing expenses Enrollment Services department. Ms. Manu noted challenges in benchmarking given different models of admissions and registration for other school districts that compare to Seattle, highlighting that her department takes on more responsibilities, with half of the staff numbers of others. Ms. Manu then discussed Policies and Procedures that guides the department's work and internal and external controls, including state audits regarding ELL and McKinney Vento students. Ms. Manu briefly recapped the Key Information Technology systems used in the office – PowerSchool, SAS, the OSPI Access Database (Non-resident students), and Customer Service Request Tracking (CSR) for complaints and issues. She noted her hope to restructure a more welcoming and warm approach though family oriented customer service. She noted also finding

alternatives for students whose children require a different learning environment and that staff look for solutions within our district, rather than resorting to private school.

Director Peters asked for clarity about the different type of learning environments. Ms. Manu noted different environments provided by option schools. Director Harris asked about the materials provided to advertise various schools. Ms. Manu responded that the department tries to get material directly from the schools to pass along. Director Pinkham asked about the benchmarking and school-based versus central-based enrollment, highlighting Boston in particular. Ms. Manu noted that Boston has school choice embedded into their enrollment processes.

Director Peters then thanked everyone for their time, and this section of the work session concluded at 5:17pm.

### **Oversight Work Session: Enrollment Planning**

The session started at 5:15 p.m.

This session was staffed by Superintendent Larry Nyland, Associate Superintendent Flip Herndon and Director of Enrollment Planning Ashley Davies.

Ms. Davies opened the session by expressing her appreciation for the collaborative partnerships with Enrollment Services created by the new organizational structure. Ms. Davies shared the agenda and then started by discussing department functions, including enrollment and resident projections; assignments, open enrollment, school choice and seat management; growth boundaries; the Student Assignment Plan; data and spatial analysis and support; and demographic research and partnerships. For boundaries, she called out a need to find ways to more equitably focus work streams so they can look at other ways to use areas with existing capacity, such as finding programs that attract families, advertising those programs, or redrawing boundaries between an over-enrolled and under-enrolled school. In reviewing the strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) analysis, Ms. Davies highlighted her highly skilled analytical staff who are passionate about this work and its equity components as a major strength. Another strength noted was the collaboration with other departments and efforts to break down silos, a collective focus on accuracy and quality of data, and asking questions of understanding.

Ms. Davies identified areas for improvement. One of which is documenting processes and procedures, and making sure we are clear in communicating them so we set expectations and that we meet those expectations. Another weakness is that the team is small, with not a lot of overlap in skill sets so when there are heavy periods of time with a lot of engagement and analysis, the department doesn't have the ability to manage everything at one time. Additional community engagement often results in creating more work streams, so it is important to keep that in mind. Opportunities highlighted include enhancing communications with parents and families, benchmarking with similar districts, and more professional development and cross-training. For professional development, community engagement requires some very specific skills that the team does not have. Ms. Davies noted she wants to build those skills and ensure that not only is the department communicating, but that they are engaging in a culturally appropriate way. Threats/risks include balancing workload and staff, dependencies on data, and conflicting priorities and potential changes in plans and projections.

Director Geary noted that Enrollment Planning are put in the position of creating things within the district that should be decided outside of the department's area, like the establishment or elimination of programs. Director Geary expressed that the district needs to be mindful of that and fix it so that Enrollment Planning

isn't in the crossfire at the meetings. Dr. Flip Herndon, Associate Superintendent for Operations and Capital, answered that the team works to have good communication across departments especially the programmatic departments and that the decisions on programs being offered and what resources are available are outside of Enrollment Planning. He then said Director Geary is correct that the cross departmental conversations are important.

Director Geary replied that sometimes even with interdepartmental communication there is board input that needs to be activated that is not, particularly around program elimination and placement. Director Blanford said that the desire to provide clarity in community engagement is an honorable goal, but it is possible that providing so much information can end up working to the detriment of the work. Ms. Davies replied that Enrollment Planning sees every meeting as an opportunity for learning how to communicate with families and spend time thinking about how best to structure meetings to ensure delivery of accurate information. Director Peters noted that there are a lot of interlocking parts to these issues and it can be complicated.

Director Peters then expressed concern about how dependent the department is on data from others, which was mentioned in the SWOT analysis as both a threat and a weakness. She also expressed that if the Board can be brought in sooner in the process, they will not need to make changes and can bring in the feedback from the community to tie it all together. Related to the dependence on data from other departments, Ms. Davies replied that the best solution being used is to remind teams early what is needed. Director Harris raised the example of the last iteration of the Student Assignment Plan (SAP) where there were late-developed pieces, such as adding dual language to Sealth and to HCC at Madison. She asked if Enrollment Planning sat down with other departments to do a lessons learned review.

Associate Superintendent Herndon said there are times that they try to do that, noting past efforts to map overlapping processes for different departments, and when decisions have to be made in time for open enrollment. He pointed out that it is a challenge and there are definitely difficult conversations that have to be had, but every department wants things to go smoothly. Ms. Davies highlighted some accomplishments. The department was only five students off from the projected enrollment last fall. Enrollment Planning also had greatest year-over-year gains on the principal satisfaction survey, and the department significantly increased community engagement efforts. In reviewing the department organizational chart, Ms. Davies reminded the Board Directors that the department has the only GIS position in the district so all maps come through one person in Enrollment Planning. Ms. Davies then reviewed department goals and objectives, including attracting and retaining quality team members, accurately projecting enrollment, and monitoring seat assignments and targeted enrollment for each school.

Director Geary asked how the department quantifies seat management. Ms. Davies replied that management is a complex process, but believes in the next iteration of this the department will be able to provide some additional ways to measure. Director Geary pointed out that the Principal Satisfaction Survey could be used to potentially measure seat management.

Ms. Davies mentioned that the Student Assignment Plan goal is very high level as there are many objectives and measures in preparing it and communicating that document. Going forward the department wants to break down the technical terms and make sure it is a document that is accessible and that makes sense for families. She noted that the growth boundaries goal is about making sure the changes are effectively communicated, and capacity is effectively managed, while often managing competing priorities. The Key Performance Indicators slide was reviewed. Ms. Davies mentioned that there are two dedicated email addresses, and that emails are responded to quickly with at least an acknowledgement.

When there is a high volume, it is hard to answer each message with a thoughtful response right away, but many families just want to know that their input is being reviewed. She explained that the majority of the Enrollment Planning budget is allocated for staffing and benefits. There is a small portion that goes to things like printing and contractual services. The 16-17 budget includes one-time funding through goal 3. In discussing benchmarking, Ms. Davies explained that not all districts have departments like Enrollment Planning— only those districts that are bigger and facing growth. She then highlighted that her team has been trying to engage with a large number of other districts outside of the districts in Washington, to find out how they do community engagement.

Director Geary asked that the Austin School District be added to the other benchmarking partners. In her work with Great City Schools, she has seen similarities. Ms. Davies noted that the projection accuracy slide is part of benchmarking and is used to start conversations with other districts. Director Harris asked about the effect of not requiring choices from families about option schools until May and whether other districts do that. Associate Superintendent Herndon agreed that waiting until May does have an impact on work the department is trying to do and the preparation for the next year, noting that Tacoma does not wait as long and for others, he does not know.

Director Harris asked that the department take a look at the timing and the consequences to other work streams. Ms. Davies reviewed policies and procedures that guide the department's work, including Board policies in the 2200 series, the 3100 series, D09.00 and H13.00. She noted they are also guided by Superintendent Procedures, 3130SP on student assignment. She highlighted key internal and external controls, include the policies and procedures previously mentioned, Superintendent procedures, district and Board priorities and goals. Externally there are federal and state regulations, and school and community input. She explained that the department has one outside contract for \$18,000 for growth boundaries communications, noting it is a minimal amount for communications across a year. She reviewed that the key information technology systems for the department include the Student Assignment System, ESRI/GIS, PowerSchool, SQL Server and SQL Reporting Services. In looking forward, she noted there are Board policies (D09.00 and H13.00) to be reviewed. The department's focus areas include continued improvement in communication and transparency, increased collaboration and partnerships to improve processes, and continued benchmarking. Emerging trends are the need for program and boundary mapping to increase understanding around enrollment options, transparency, and improved responsiveness.

Director Peters thanked Ms. Davies for the presentation. Director Harris expressed her appreciation for E.R. Alvarez's participation on the Community Engagement Task Force. Director Burke requested that Ms. Davies reach out to the University of Washington professor who offered to look at assignments; that the department consider comparing projections at one-year, three-year, and five-year marks to see the delta; and he would like to see a trend line of percent utilization for every school over time. Director Pinkham thanked Ms. Davies and asked that minimizing impact to families be first in the goal under growth boundaries. Director Geary supported Director Burke's request for five-year projections. Director Peters thanked the departments for these presentations.

This Session was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

### **Executive Session: to Evaluate the Performance of a Public Employee**

Director Peters called the executive session to order at 6:11pm.

All Directors were present.

This meeting was staffed by Superintendent Larry Nyland, Deputy Superintendent Stephen Nielsen, Associate Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Michael Tolley, Assistant Superintendent of Business & Finance JoLynn Berge, and General Counsel Noel Treat.

At 8:11pm, Director Peters announced that the executive session to evaluate the Performance of a Public Employee was now expected to go an additional 30 minutes, with an anticipated end time of 8:41pm.

Directors Blanford and Pinkham left at 8:30pm.

At 8:41pm, Director Peters recessed out of the executive session.

### **Adjourn**

The Special Meeting reconvened at 8:42 pm and there being no further business to come before the Board, Director Peters adjourned the special meeting at 8:42 pm.