Board Special Meeting
Work Sessions: Technology to Support Teaching and Learning; Budget
Wednesday, September 27, 2017, 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Living Computer Museum
2245 1ˢᵗ Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98134

Minutes

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m.

Directors Geary, Burke, Peters, Harris, Pinkham, and Patu were present. Director Blanford was not present.

Work Session: Technology to Support Teaching and Learning

This session was staffed by Superintendent Larry Nyland, Chief Information Officer John Krull, Chief of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Dr. Kyle Kinoshita, Instructional Technology and Library Services Manager Eric Caldwell, and Information Security Manager April Mardock.

Director Burke began the meeting thanking Nina Ares and Lath Carlson of the Living Computer Museum for hosting and providing tours beforehand. Mr. Krull then thanked Ms. Ares and Mr. Carlson before mentioning that professional development had been done at the museum during the summer by Mr. Caldwell's team. Mr. Krull went on to outline the purpose of the work session noting the goal was to illustrate how technology supports teaching and learning and to inform the School Board that the department is in support of the district vision, mission and goals.

Mr. Krull went on to expand the purpose of the session, noting it was to demonstrate how technology amplifies and accelerates teaching and learning, with Kyle Kinoshita, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction representing theory and Eric Caldwell, Manager of Instructional Technology and Library Services representing the practice. Mr. Krull went on to mention there was not going to be a specific ask, rather the goal was to gather feedback and input on the direction the district is going. Moreover, Mr. Krull expressed the need to conduct the work session using a "Purpose, Results, Implementation" (PRI) format in order for the Board to understand digital technology.

Directors Peters and Patu arrived at 4:38 p.m.

Mr. Krull then played a video about how technology supports teaching and learning before outlining the three major takeaways he wanted the School Board to have: technology amplifying and accelerating the shifts in teaching and learning, technology supporting college and career readiness and the promise made to upgrade and expand classroom/student technology using the BTA IV Levy.

In response to Mr. Krull's request for feedback, Director Burke asked that a previous slide be put back up regarding the PRI of the work session. He noted the number one purpose, students was not present or called out which gave him pause. He went on to highlight struggling with the result since students were not mentioned and expressed the need to have the purpose and results refined.

Director Peters then brought up a documentary she had recently seen, "Screenagers" that highlighted the addictive effect too much time in front of a screen can have on children and mentioned that research is not backing up the decisions being made around technology. She added that there needed to be a balance of technology and human interaction, mentioning technology should be used as a tool, not a replacement. After expressing the need for quality control, she recounted a recent visit to Cleveland High School where students didn't have a sense of what was a reliable source and stressed the importance of teaching instructors what is and isn't good content.

Director Harris expressed concern over who provides some of the research, noting some programs could be used as a "Trojan horse" and that digital curriculum needed to be vetted using the same standards as textbooks are before student exposure. Director Pinkham spoke about colonization through technology and expressed the importance of using the equity tool kit when discussing and applying technology. Director Geary highlighted the need for a strong policy to ensure technology is used ethically and responsibly. She went on to talk about a new generation of children growing up with the expectation of using technology and the need for them to be prepared with the necessary efficiencies to avoid being caught off guard as they progress through school.

Director Burke agreed with Director Peters regarding the need for research, Director Geary on the ethical use of technology and Director Pinkham on cultural appropriateness before adding the need to be deliberate in developing a strategy and addressing need. Mr. Krull noted the feedback and mentioned the work session be focused around teaching and learning before introducing Kyle Kinoshita, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction.

Dr. Kinoshita started by mentioning a new commitment between teaching and learning and technology services where decisions would be guided by learning goals established by the district. He went on to discuss the importance of selecting digital tools with the purpose of amplifying teaching and learning and noted how secondary re visioning goals of instructional technology are aligned with teaching and learning. Dr. Kinoshita then highlighted global companies with headquarters in Seattle and spoke about the technology skillsets required to be "Seattle ready". Dr. Kinoshita also expressed the need to illustrate the connection between technology and secondary re visioning highlighting the importance of teaching students 21st century skills.

Dr. Kinoshita then went on to discuss the 6 C's, highlighting character in the form of work ethic and social responsibility along with citizenship before discussing deep and project based learning. Dr. Kinoshita noted that the purpose of deep learning was to move away from simple memorization to developing student's ability to engage the 6 C's (collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, citizenship, character and communication). Dr. Kinoshita described project based learning as engaging in real world scenarios and finding real solutions through critical thinking and teamwork.

Dr. Kinoshita then addressed the myth that technology is replacing teachers, noting a strong teacher is needed to help guide students in their learning whether it be in evaluating data or assisting in research. He mentioned lessons learned from technology including a shift away from placing a student in front of a computer and hoping they learn to a more collaborative environment of interaction and access to more resources and expertise worldwide. Dr. Kinoshita went on to talk about the type of learning selected guiding the use of technology and the importance of selecting the appropriate tools in order to accelerate teaching and learning. Dr. Kinoshita concluded his remarks by talking about access, highlighting the fact that technology can support different tools, providing the example of Homeroom and its ability to accelerate the use of data and the digital toolkit. He closed by speaking about how technology can eliminate issues of access and enable all students to have access to the same information and resources regardless of where they live.

In response to Dr. Kinoshita, Director Peters expressed that the best teachers already practiced project based and deep learning and questioned how we as a district encourage project based learning when everything we do is funneled towards a test. Furthermore, she went on to talk about the need to connect testing to project based learning. Dr. Kinoshita responded that project based learning can broaden the skills students are acquiring through wider access to resources offering more depth and authenticity. In response to a question from Director Harris regarding whether or not deep learning is synonymous with project based learning, Dr. Kinoshita noted a slight difference; deep learning being more broad while project based learning being a method of deep learning. Director Harris followed up and asked if project based learning was any different from innovation schools to which Dr. Kinoshita responded the differences were minimal. Director Harris then requested definitions in order to make framing the conversations simpler before inquiring if "grit" would be part of the 6 C's. Dr. Kinoshita responded by saying "yes". In response to a question from Director Harris asking if it is your own fault when you fail, Dr. Kinoshita replied no, it is a matter of figuring out what happened and making the subsequent changes to ensure success in the future before noting this was just an introduction to the types of technology tools supporting teaching and learning.

Director Geary expressed concern around the fact that children are growing up adept to technology and that adults may not be able to challenge them effectively or evaluate the technology they are being pushed to use. Dr. Kinoshita responded saying professional development was the number one goal and equipping teachers with the necessary skills was paramount.

Director Burke expressed his uncomfortableness with the conversation and his concern that deep learning was being tied to technology. He urged teaching and learning and technology services to find a balance and brought up the fact that the average target online lesson is now six minutes with student's attention spans getting shorter. Dr. Kinoshita acknowledged the request and responded saying the School Board has that commitment to find a healthy balance.

Director Harris asked why our most vulnerable students are being hooked up to ingenuity and expressed the need for digital curriculum to be vetted using the same standards as traditional textbooks along with ensuring the race and equity tool, is applied. In response, Dr. Kinoshita spoke of shifting thinking about technology as learning from a computer to learning with a computer. Director Harris replied requesting the Board be provided additional background regarding what programs are being used to which Dr. Kinoshita acknowledged and said would be provided in an upcoming Friday memo outlining processes.

Eric Caldwell, Manager of Instructional Technology and Library Services, began his presentation with the intent to highlight areas of success within the district as well as gaps the department is trying to close. Mr. Caldwell spoke about the engagement his team had done, speaking with parents, teachers, community partners, administrators and students. He noted the feedback received focused on an environment rich with content that would allow students to engage and have their individual needs met. Mr. Caldwell went on to speak about needing tools that would allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and engage with others more collaboratively. He went on to speak about figuring out how best to assess learning and better involve parents and guardians in classroom learning.

Mr. Caldwell then highlighted the district's relationship with the Seattle Public Library to help provide access to more students and families before specifically mentioning Cleveland High School and Louisa Boren K-8. Mr. Caldwell highlighted Cleveland as a school that engages in project based learning and Louisa Boren K8 as an example of a school where technology is effectively used to support student exploration and learning. After bringing up a case where a teacher left one school for another with more resources, Director Geary inquired if that case was a "one off" or indicative of a larger issue and expressed concern over coordination and lack of support. Furthermore, Director Geary expressed the need to have special education addressed and woven into the support the district provides.

Director Harris brought up the need for professional development and asked how it is equitable to have teachers train on the job if they are not being paid with Director Burke noting the problem is systematic. In response, Mr. Caldwell said equity was being addressed however, access was missing which would contribute to an equitable outcome across the district. Director Peters followed up on Mr. Caldwell's earlier story and asked if it was lack of equipment at a school that led to a teacher leaving to which Mr. Krull replied new schools had laptops instead of desktops before mentioning the effort being made to get equitable technology in schools to support teaching and learning. Director Peters responded asking if Mr. Krull was referring to a 1 to 1 ratio in which he replied he was not before adding different schools had different access, noting newer schools had mobile access.

Mr. Caldwell mentioned the challenges of accessing computer labs noting scheduling conflicts and need before Director Patu asked what was being done to reach low-income students and how the topics being discussed were having an impact in regards to closing the opportunity gap. Mr. Krull responded by saying funds were earmarked in BTA IV and technology being placed in schools was tied to equity. He followed up his remarks by providing an update on the Request for Proposal (RFP) currently out regarding all future technology purchases from one single vendor along with the timeline for providing laptops to all certificated staff in the fall. Mr. Krull finished his comments by expressing his desire to come back to the Board with a rollout plan including phased stages of technology implementation tied to teaching and learning initiatives.

In response to a question regarding hardware and software by Director Peters, Mr. Krull said both were going to be purchased based on need before addressing a concern brought up by Director Pinkham that Middle College did not have adequate bandwidth declaring his team had ensured its bandwidth and wireless access points were working properly. Director Pinkham then asked if technology encompassed more than just hardware to which Mr. Krull said yes before adding the RFP was for hardware, while the rollout and subsequent use would be guided by the needs of teaching and learning.

Director Harris brought up the figure of $16.5 million dollars and asked if that amount encompassed professional development, hardware and software purchases before asking for more clarity and details before a potential vote to which Mr. Krull acknowledged and agreed to. Director Geary stated her desire to see full transparency when discussing the spending of levy funds with Director Peters following up asking that measures of success and evidence supporting actions going forward be included in upcoming Board Action Reports. Director Patu added that she would like to see evidence on how technology is being used to close the achievement gap before Director Burke mentioned such a large investment carrying such a large impact needed a clear story.

April Mardock, Information Security Manager started her presentation by stating that the district uses multiple vendors when dealing with security infrastructure to allow for different protections and flexibility, mentioning cloud services which allow for added controls and sensitive content to be audited and recalled if necessary. Ms. Mardock stated there was an ad hoc committee made up of librarians, teachers and parents who review filter policy before mentioning all laptops were encrypted and using virtual private networks (VPN). In addition, Ms. Mardock outlined ways the district was preventing security breaches including having a regular patching schedule, updating servers automatically and ensuring the networks are partitioned to prevent potential attacks from spreading.

Ms. Mardock then mentioned a change in RFP policy along with contracts that specifically prevents vendors from selling student sensitive data before noting Schoology's assistance in helping train users and teachers around the issue of cyber security. In response to a question from Director Pinkham around application onboarding and account management, Ms. Mardock mentioned the district's partnership with Clever, a platform that connects software applications and the district providing more control and oversight. Mr. Krull added that a new application onboarding process had been completed with applications being vetted through curriculum and security. In response to a question from Director

Geary around education for the parents, Ms. Mardock responded suggesting "common sense media" an online resource that provides free material for parents and kids around digital citizenship. Mr. Krull followed up adding collaborating with the Seattle public library would help with community outreach and issues surrounding access. Director Burke then suggested a white paper related to cyber citizenry and parent education before Director Harris asked for a timeline and inventory of online curriculum, which Mr. Krull said, would be included in an upcoming Friday memo. In response to an inquiry by Director Peters about the possibility of student data becoming public as a result of a company going bankrupt, Ms. Mardock replied that the district's contracts and RFP's contained language that explicitly prohibited companies from selling that type of information.

This session ended at 6:14pm.

Work Session: Budget

This portion of the meeting began at 6:20pm.

Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance JoLynn Berge summarized the agenda. She spoke about the revenue analysis of status quo to enacted budget for 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21showing additional revenue per pupil. By 2020-21, the status quo revenue is higher than that provided under HB2242. She explained the difference in the levy amount from the old levy amount, which is higher than levy amounts under HB2242. Under the status quo, or current levy laws, it is estimated the levy would increase every year by approximately $15 Million (M).

Director Geary asked about taxpayer perspective. Ms. Berge explained overall the taxpayer would be paying more and the District would receive less. This February 2018 tax bill be significantly higher for taxpayers because of the increase in the statewide property tax rates.

Ms. Berge spoke about what the District fund balance would look like for the District going into 2018-19. Under HB2242 the district would still have a budget deficit, given current assumptions in school years 2019-20 and beyond. Initial projections showed a small deficit for 2018-19, but based on the closing of 2016-17 and unanticipated revenues from the state, we likely will see 2018-19 have a budget surplus, assuming no changes to costs or programs.

Director Peters asked what is the difference between the $74.5M deficit from last year. Ms. Berge explained that increased revenues from the state and other policy changes regarding levies are the main factors in the large difference between a $74.5 million deficit in 2017-18 to a likely projected surplus in 2018-19.

Ms. Berge spoke about the funding gap in special education. She explained the State is closing the gap but it is still not enough and there remains a significant underfunding of special education by the state, which we will have to use levy funds for.

Ms. Berge explained the funding gap for Certificated Administrative Staff. The State allocated funding for 209 Administrators and the District has hired 206, most of which are principals. The funding gap for Certificated Administrative staff could be paid for out of levy funds, but state law now limits how much levy can be used for these staff. We could only hire elementary principals, we would not be allowed to pay other principals their current salary amounts. We have lost principals to other Districts because they are able to offer more pay.

Director Harris asked if Ms. Berge could pull out principals from each level on slide 10. Ms. Berge explained she could use another slide that breaks up elementary and middle school principals.

Director Geary asked do we come out ahead in any areas. Ms. Berge explained currently no. She explained the levels of the teacher salaries.

Ms. Berge explained no additional funds would be left for enrichment levies costs at this point. Beginning in 2020 most of the levy will be spent on special education and English Language Learners (ELL). Ms. Berge explained we are still paying for the same items as before HB2242.

Director Harris asked about additional activities that SPI determine to be outside of basic education. Ms. Berge explained that might allow Districts some chance to weigh in those items. Eventually a Washington Administrative Code (WAC) will be developed for this.

Ms. Berge explained the limit on the levies and the statue on the ballot has not changed, and rollback levies maintain the same for 2018 collections.

Director Geary asked about City of Seattle levy. Ms. Berge explained the City and the District are both using the term "enrichment". The Superintendent and the District have begun planning for how to communicate the difference for our maintenance and operations levy from the City's levy. It is imperative to the District, to pass the Maintenance and Operation Levy, which is the old name, and/or or the Enrichment Levy, which is the new levy in state law, as SPS needs the levy to keep the lights on.

Ms. Berge explained she has spoken to the City of Seattle about our levy and how the timing with the City levy could cause confusion for our taxpayers since they now use similar language. We are trying to determine how much latitude in language we have regarding the use of "enrichment" because it sounds like it is for extra things, but it is not for us, it is status quo.

Ms. Berge explained the Board would need to work in the pre ballot levy approval by OSPI into the usual process. Ms. Berge gave the timeline of what would be occurring for the Board and for the voters.

Deputy Stephen Nielsen explained the City has not decided for sure when they will run their levy in 2018. This would be decided once a new Mayor is voted on and everyone understands the importance of this.

Ms. Berge gave the update on information discussed at the July 26 work session. The District did anticipate K -3 coming in and she wanted to clarify. She wanted to confirm we are spending some of that.

Ms. Berge spoke about $5.5M deficient that will be an underspent in 2018-19 and that it is likely we will updated this to show a budget surplus We will be bargaining and we know some funding could be needed for that. Ms. Berge asked the Board to begin thinking about repaying the rainy day funds if the projected surplus is large enough. More information will be provided to the board at either the October or November budget work sessions.

Director Pinkham asked what the difference is between other revenue and other resources. Ms. Berge will email the entire board with this explanation. The biggest thing in other revenue would be the City of Seattle levy.

Ms. Berge spoke about fall enrollment and headcount. She explained the differences between full time equivalent (FTE) versus headcount enrollment. She reviewed the headcount and FTE numbers for the previous year.

Director Harris asked if we could tell how many students are accessing running start. Ms. Berge explained she could tell how many students per school are taking running start, but she is unable to tell why they do or do not choose to do running start. Ms. Berge will send out this year and last year running start numbers to the board after current year number are available mid-October.

Director Harris asked if we are still changing the Weighted Staffing Standard (WSS). Ms. Berge spoke about how the WSS is being worked on that and we still have additional discussions that need to occur with our principals. It will be communicated to the Board in January with a recommendation.

Director Peters asked if we could under project rather than over project enrollment. Ms. Berge explained we are trying to reduce the number and be conservative.

Adjourn

This meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.