



Board Special Meeting

Work Sessions: High School Policies 2415 and 2420; 2016-17 Program Review Reports

Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 4:30 – 7:00 pm

Auditorium, John Stanford Center

2445 – 3rd Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134

Minutes

Work Session: High School Policies 2415 and 2420

Director Geary called this meeting to order at 4:30pm. Director Geary chaired the meeting since Director Burke was not there in person and was calling in. Directors present were Pinkham, Patu, Geary, Blanford, and Burke (by phone); Dr. Nyland joined the meeting at 4:31. Director Peters joined the meeting at 4:32 pm. Director Harris joined the meeting at 4:47 pm.

Seattle Public School staff members present were Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Michael Tolley, Deputy Superintendent Stephen Nielsen, Director of College and Career Readiness Caleb Perkins, Chief of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Kyle Kinoshita, Ballard High School Principal Keven Wynkoop, and Garfield High School Academic Intervention Specialist Kris McBride.

Dr. Perkins began the session previewing that the purpose of the work session was to address components of outdated policies on credits and graduation requirements that need to be updated and how these policies relate to the 24-credit current requirement and associated task force recommendations, and helping students become college and career ready. Dr. Perkins spoke about community engagement that touched on focus groups, family surveys, community meetings, and various data collections.

The specific policy changes the session addressed were the proposed removal of the 150 hours per credit requirement in Board Policy 2420 and the proposed removal of the 2.0 GPA requirement in Board Policy 2415. Dr. Perkins answered a question from Directors about the focus group data reports regarding data that included different social and economic communities. Dr. Perkins explained that with transitioning to the 24-credit option we need to ensure that students are thinking more proactively about their future college and career plans. Mr. Tolley spoke about one example of the requirement to take two world language courses noting that students also have the option of a Career & Technical Education (CTE) course that does not require the world language credit. Personalized pathways help students make other considerations and expand options for students. Staff members and directors discussed testing language proficiencies.

Staff provided the following rationale for the removal of the 150-hour requirement: our high schools need to add additional opportunities to get credits to get to the 24. Schools will have to look for flexibility that allows non-traditional school day activities such as internships. The State Board of Education proposed this change because it would focus on student focused learning, allow flexibility, and allow district to determine and individualize course time to meet state's standards. The anticipated effects would be that we would allow schools to offer more credit-earning opportunities without compromising the rigor of courses.

Director Peters asked about parameters for how many or how few hours to earn credit. Dr. Perkins explained there is language in our current policy to ensure courses are based on required standards and competencies. He noted that, in addition, Spokane, Tacoma, Evergreen, and Federal Way are some of

the districts that do not have hour requirements for their credits but instead, define credits in different ways. For example, Spokane's policy outlines different options for defining a credit: competency-based credit, standards-based credit, time-based credit, or a combination of the three. He noted SPS could consider following that model.

Director Blanford asked if student could conceivably not spend any time in class and through internships and testing, could they complete school? Tolley responded that students will spend time in class but may not meet the 150-hour measure that is the current policy. There is an 8 period AP block at Cleveland that has a waiver in place for the students. Director Harris joined the meeting at this point. Directors and staff members discussed that it would make sense to have a minimum threshold that is controlled before students seek internship or other credits.

Director Nyland spoke about the educational hours over the year and how many hours could break down into periods per day/week/semester. He explained how the minimum would bounce around based on the master scheduling and how it would vary but be around the 150-hour current requirement. The discussion continued around the language proficiency that some students may already know an existing language and provided a test that allowed students to earn credit for their language.

Director Burke spoke about hours per year and days per year and the need to examine other places where this time is distributed. The state has removed the 150 hours per course and since substituted the 1080 hours per year for a FTE student. Directors and staff members spoke about the cons and what comes to mind, such as whether AP and IB educators comfortable with the amount of time to be able to deliver content.

In regards to enrollment, Directors asked about how this will impact student counts when thinking about students in seats vs students in internships or other kinds of credit-earning opportunities. Mr. Nielsen spoke about the district receives the same budget even if a student is in Running Start. Director Harris asked about site-based decisions and administrative oversight. Director Harris asked about the IBX program and the 12th year internship. Discussion around the breakdown continued and directors expressed they would like a deeper discussion about this. Dr. Perkins responded saying that we would have a process for centrally reviewing how credits are offered.

Keven Wynkoop from Ballard High School and Kristen McBride from Garfield High School joined the discussion on whether to consider removing the 2.0 GPA requirement. Dr. Perkins says there are number of measures for students to demonstrate academic proficiency. Seattle Public Schools is currently one of two districts in the state that require this minimum 2.0 GPA. Given this requirement, there are scenarios that students have received inequitable treatment or been given confusing guidance.

Mr. Wynkoop spoke about a specific student that has had various life challenges that have impacted his academic career but he now expresses a renewed sense of leadership and sense of self. However, this student will fall below the 2.0 graduation requirement. He noted that the reality is that that GPA is not objective and 70% can mean different things in different classrooms; teachers can have emphasis on a various number factors for grading. The grade they receive at the end can be subjective.

Kristen McBride strongly advocated for this policy change because she has seen the same circumstances at Garfield High School as was described by Principal Wynkoop for Ballard High School. She spoke about the turnaround throughout the four years of a student's academic high school career. Telling a student that they would not make graduation requirements after overcoming their life challenges has been a very detrimental thing for some students. The cumulative GPA of all four years is the only GPA that will continue with their life.

Director Blanford spoke about his appreciation for the principal's and counselor's testimony and about cumulative GPAs and indicated that it doesn't have the significance that it held in the past. Businesses have expressed that they want to hold SPS students to a rigorous expectation. If we eliminate this standard, are we lowering the bar and giving the perception that we are lowering standards.

Wynkoop spoke about the fact that courses are much more rigorous and standardized than they used to be when the 2.0 GPA requirement was put into place. There are Common Core expectations and other standards for every single course that teachers are using to design their course. Those standards should be the high bar that says student has reached that level of rigor.

Director Blanford: what does a cumulative GPA mean versus a standard related to the common core? Looking at a transcript to see if a student is passing classes is much more significant. Wednesdays mean teachers are working together to better align their standards and expectations.

Regarding Policy No. 2420, Director Geary asked, should we add a paragraph that defines what "credit" means? That way we don't get caught up in the letter grade.

Director Peters asked if these students are passing the state Smarter Balanced tests. Staff noted some are passing Smarter Balanced or ACT (or another objective measure) and they are meeting every other requirement of graduation except the GPA. Principal Wynkoop noted that the military also requires a high school diploma.

Director Patu also recognized that there is a need to provide more credit-earning opportunities so that students can graduate.

Director Burke spoke about external indicators and the idea of meeting rigorous standards. He is concerned that students might move forward without us having provided them with all the opportunities to become successful. He noted the need to take steps to ensure students are not set up to fail.

Director Harris asked what would be benefit of redefining cumulative GPA for junior and senior year? Director Geary said that having an expectation creates a strong sense for students. We are funded by the state a certain way to deliver a certain product which are the graduation requirements.

Director Pinkham asked a question about the grading scale.

Director Blanford noted there is a huge unfairness component that depends on the school and principal. Some principals are very willing to discuss waivers and other principals that are not. There are serious ramifications. One student at one school is able to graduate while another student with same circumstances would not be able to graduate.

Dr. Perkins said we are aligned on the need to maintain a high level of rigor. On a final note, transitioning to the 24 credit requirement requires changes to high school programing.

For next steps, Dr. Perkins shared that based on the discussion, we will bring an updated Board Action Report to the November 1st Board meeting for introduction.

This portion of the meeting recessed at 5:36 pm.

Work Session: 2016-17 Program Review Reports

This session started at 5:38 pm. Staff presenters for this presentation included Director of Research and Evaluation Eric Anderson, Research Scientist Senior Jessica Beaver, and Lead Statistical Analyst Anna Cruz.

Dr. Anderson opened the work session by talking about 2016-17 SMART Goal #3: Program Mapping and Review, and how Research and Evaluation (R&E) undertook the design and implementation for a pilot program review process for systematically evaluating the implementation and impact of current program offerings. The description of program review is the application of evaluation methods to address questions about program operations and results. This is a valuable strategy for improving the quality of district programs and services over time.

Dr. Anderson talked about policy 2090 and the requirement that Seattle Public Schools (SPS) evaluate instructional programs and services. He talked about the goals of the program review and the two general approaches: research and development studies and program evaluations. The two programs R&E, in partnership with Teaching and Learning, chose to review were International Schools and Dual Language Immersion (DLI) and Advanced Learning (AL)/Spectrum.

The first program review was International Schools and Dual Language Immersion. Dr. Beaver headed the review for this program review and spoke of the three areas that they studied. DLI Models, Perceptions of Implementation and Outcomes, and Outcomes and Impact Analysis. The presentation focused on the implementation and impact analysis.

Staff noted there are currently 10 international schools in SPS. The presentation showed how DLI models vary across schools and regions, and the pathways for each region. The study included four main data sources: student-level data analyses, interviews with all of the international school principals, and in-depth site visits at five of the international schools including focus groups with students and teachers, a survey of teachers, and district budget data. The main theme that emerged from teachers and principals is that, in terms of the overarching goal of teaching “global and cultural competency,” every school should be an international school. Multiple focus groups felt that this was important. The funding sources for this program, which include start-up funds, departmental funding, International Schools Leadership Team (ISLT) funding, grant funding, and staffing mitigation, varied by year. Grant funding also varies across regions/pathways.

Director Harris asked about the parent focus group and wanted to know which school participated. The school was Concord Elementary and the questions were asked in English and Spanish, in June 2017. Director Harris was wondering how to use the information from Concord for the John Stanford and McDonald International schools since their DLI models are different. How are we able to extrapolate the information when the focus group is from an outlier school? She noted parents are pushing back. Dr. Beaver responded that the information from the review highlights differences by DLI model, which is important to understanding program implementation districtwide. However, due to the timing of data collection, the most recent concerns raised at Concord Elementary are not included in this review.

Director Blanford asked about what the study meant by mitigation (in the report). Dr. Beaver responded that mitigation had to happen because there were situations for international schools when there was not an opportunity to combine small class sizes (Spanish/Japanese cannot be in one classroom). Director Blanford commented that since cohorts get smaller as the students get older there would have to be more mitigation.

Director Peters asked how many students are being served in the international schools district-wide. Ms. Cruz responded that there are currently 1500 DLI Spanish, 250 Mandarin, and 420 Japanese students enrolled in DLI schools.

Director Burke asked about the 6 FTE staffing that were requested, and whether or not it was requested or awarded. Mr. Tolley answered that all 6 were awarded for the 2016-17 school year. Director Burke wanted to confirm that the Weighted Student Staffing (WSS) is the same for these schools as other schools. It was answered that yes, they are funded like other schools.

Another cost added to this program is that curriculum materials are not be readily available in other languages because of copyright laws and cannot be translated.

Director Geary asked about study participants' perceptions of DLI as a gap closing strategy and whether or not there was any insight as to why they were not greater. Did the teachers provide anecdotal evidence why this is not as successful? Dr. Beaver responded by noting that the southeast (SE) and southwest (SW) regions saw more success than the northwest (NW), though the reported measure combines all responses.

Director Blanford wondered if there was something that might have happened during the proficiency testing for the Mandarin reading, written, and oral communication testing, since the scores seemed so low. Ms. Cruz responded that, for the Mandarin testing in Reading, there is only one class that has 16 students, and that particular data point is not consistent with Writing results, nor results from different grade levels, so these results might be due to a testing anomaly.

Director Harris asked about the source information of the 37 teachers; if they were represented across the 10 DLI schools. Dr. Beaver answered that the teachers are represented across the 10 DLI schools.

Director Harris also asked about the elementary school children in dual language programs, wondering if we should expect to see high test scores right away, or would we expect test scores to rise in grades 4-7, and how this can be explained. Additionally, have we taken into account that some of these tests might not be appropriate, and do we note the fact that the testing might not be appropriate. Dr. Beaver responded that they did run a longitudinal analysis as part of the impact analysis, although the qualitative data suggest that participants expect results to be lagged. Ms. Cruz also addressed the testing issue, asserting that, while Smarter Balanced scores are not a perfect measure by any means, they are the best and most reliable information that the district can use to assess student performance in a quantitative manner.

The presentation moved on to the Impact Analysis Research that was done for the program review, and discussed that it was both qualitative and quantitative. The presentation showed the research questions that this review was hoping to answer, and the impact analysis methods that were used in this review. The information and results of their research questions were presented. Regarding research question #1, the review showed that there were statistically significant, positive effects for students enrolled in DLI programs compared to similar students not in DLI. For research question #2, there did not seem to be significant differences in English Language Learner (ELL) exit rates between students in the DLI program and other ELL students. The conclusion that the program review hoped to answer regarding DLI being a "gap closing strategy", was that there are positive effects on student achievement as measured by Smarter Balanced, it does not reveal any negative impacts on student achievement, and that

there is no evidence that the program effects are different for students of color compared to white students.

Director Harris asked if we have graduation data for DLI students. Ms. Cruz explained that due to difficulty with flagging DLI students in middle grades, the graduation analysis for students enrolled in DLI programs specifically was not feasible.

Director Blanford noted that the Spanish DLI shows a fairly significant change and wanted to know who is actually enrolled in the program. He asked about whether or not students of color and/or low income proportionately enrolled, and are the enrollment numbers for these students in the data.

Ms. Cruz responded that there is enrollment data by race in June 1 report. However, while Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) status was used as a control variable in the impact analysis, the report does not include descriptive data of enrollment by FRL status.

Director Harris would like to have the socio-economic data added to this review.

Director Burke was trying to understand the conclusions that this research showed. He wanted to know if each DLI group excluded other DLI groups, and if the control group includes students who might have been in a DLI program. He noted that there were positive effects in these programs. He was also wondering if the n size correlated to the effect sizes. Ms. Cruz clarified the definition of effect sizes, and also clarified that the comparison group excluded all students who were ever enrolled in an International School to avoid contamination in measurement.

Director Harris asked about benchmarking with other districts that have DLI programs; national and statewide implementation information is contained in the report. Dr. Beaver responded that there is a literature review in the Implementation Analysis section of local, state and national approaches to International Education and Dual Language Immersion. There is also a literature review included in the Impact Analysis sections on the research on DLI efficacy, which includes a comprehensive study of DLI that was recently conducted in Portland by the RAND Corporation.

Director Peters wanted to know which school was the gold standard. Dr. Beaver responded that the Portland study was districtwide – the gold standard refers to the research approach, which used a lottery system to effectively randomize students into treatment and control groups, where DLI was the treatment.

Director Patu asked whether the Spanish speakers were also ELL and whether their math scores showed that they were seeing improvements in math. Ms. Cruz responded that about 50% of Spanish DLI students are ELL and yes, the positive effects for both ELA and math are present for that group as well. No interaction was found between DLI and ELL status, however, which means that where effects exist, they are the same magnitude for ELL and non-ELL DLI students.

Director Harris asked if this survey or program review information would be forwarded to be considered in the Weighted Student Staffing (WSS) to consider that there might be extra costs associated with this program for DLI schools.

Director Geary commented that we should forward the results to the Washington State School Directors' Association to support their efforts in statewide advocacy.

Director Blanford noted that there might be a whole series of audiences that might want the data from this report to show that there could be some gap-closing. A list of organizations and other districts should be compiled so that we can show what we have done.

Dr. Nyland noted that he will be coming forward with program recaps and while this review is informative, it is not necessarily definitive, it comes at a cost, and has to be considered against all of the other programs in the district.

Director Harris noted that this was talked about at the Audit and Finance (A&F) Committee meeting, and had made a request for the summary reviews and the data sources.

Dr. Anderson would like a list of the programs in order to do an analysis for feasibility.

Ms. Sebring noted that they have been working with R&E, and want to make sure that people do not think that in order to have a DLI school that it would only need 6 teachers; support from central office staff and if there is a need for an extra teacher is not inexpensive. There is also the consideration that we cannot rely on the school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to cover the costs.

The review of programs then moved on to the report of Advanced Learning.

Dr. Anderson opened up this portion of the session discussing that there were 2 phases of work that were part of this program review: phase 1 was a descriptive analysis of "current state" Advanced Learning program, and phase 2 was design study of high-growth practices for students above or well above standard. For this program review, REA partnered with professors Dr. Nancy Hertzog and postdoctoral student Dr. Sakhavat Mammadov from the University of Washington to provide a literature review.

Per a request from Director Peters, information about Asian students was broken out from white students. It was noted that they are slightly underrepresented but not as high as other ethnic groups.

Dr. Anderson noted there has been a marginal decrease in the disproportionality of access to Advanced Learning. Ms. Hanson noted that there has been more community engagement, better customer service, and is only in year 1 for trying to ensure that there is racial equity.

Director Peters asked about what we are measuring for Spectrum students if we no longer have self-contained spectrum classes.

Dr. Anderson informed them that they did not do an impact analysis nor did it dive into the implementation, but just provided descriptive terms. This design study is intended to address ask about what the necessary conditions for meeting the needs of Advanced Learners might be.

Director Blanford asked Dr. Anderson if there were a 2nd year program review and what is the nature for the review, a deeper dive or longer longitudinal dive. Dr. Anderson said that there are still a lot of questions that need to be answered.

Director Blanford asked about the enrollment by race figure, asking if that is a measure of proportionality of overall enrollment vs. being in advanced learning? Dr. Anderson responded, no it is a measure of enrollment/access.

Director Patu asked about what the district is doing to identify students for AL, and why the southeast (SE) region does not have very many students in AL. Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Michael Tolley responded that the district is trying to answer questions around equity.

Director Patu asked what the district is doing to recruit more students of color to the AL/HCC schools. Director of Student Supports Kari Hanson discussed the different identification and the professional development and outreach strategies that the AL department have employed during the 2016-17 school year.

Director Pinkham wanted to know if it would be possible to have an actual breakdown of the number of Native American students in AL, the information does not show that there are any. Ms. Cruz responded that the breakout does not list Native American students due to FERPA constraints; however, these students are included in the analysis by virtue of their inclusion in the Historically Underserved group of students.

Director Harris raised the same concerns as the previous report and would like to have n-sizes notes about the data and the reporting. There is also a concern with the financial status of the district and with so many schools with split-level classes aren't we asking teachers to teach across as many as 5-6 grade levels for differentiation? Ms. Hanson replied that it depends on the approach that the teacher takes - teaching to a student's need vs. teaching straight at grade level.

Dr. Anderson presented the background for the literature review and the school site visits.

Director Peters noted that there is evidence that peer group does matter, but students who think in the same style, so there is benefit to the cohort. Dr. Anderson responded that it is not necessarily unbeneficial, but would like to explore more in the Seattle context. Director Harris said that the academics in the room talk about literature, but is not sure about the methodological answers. Dr. Anderson said that this is a large question that was given a very short time to review. Dr. Mammadov spoke about the methodology for their literature review. The literature on advanced and gifted learners has no consistency on how students were identified as gifted and/or advanced learners. When looking at the studies of all groups, it does not consider the cultural differences and was not consistent, so the researchers wanted to caution about the results because the factors are not comparable.

Dr. Anderson continued with the presentation.

Director Geary wanted the district to look at what was happening in Quincy; the school is mostly free and reduced lunch (FRL) population that has turned to project based learning, which is making huge differences in student achievement.

Director Blanford appreciated the thoroughness of the report and the outreach to many groups of local experts. Good teaching should not just be for advanced learners.

Director Pinkham knows that while we have to respect the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws, there needs to be a way to include the breakout of smaller ethnic groups.

Director Peters noted that if there were improvements in the curriculum that engages the student, perhaps there would be less need for some of the programs that we have. There is a need for PD for our

teachers and principals so that there is a greater understanding of all learners and to help teachers identify underrepresented students.

Ms. Hanson provided clarification on spectrum sites and spectrum PD. Student Support Services is starting to hold summits for teachers, and the Advanced Learning department is starting develop curriculum for PD and is also starting to collaborate with the ELL department.

Director Burke noted that good teaching and learning should not be given to only one category of student. The two presentations were a stark contrast. The DLI presentation had some data based on subjective opinions but gave a comprehensive data review. The AL presentation felt totally subjective and did not include that the data that is there. He felt that there couldn't be any decisions until there was more information. He felt that the district needs to be more thoughtful and deliberate.

Director Harris enquired about the curriculum that we have for PD, and could the topic of differentiation be a topic for a paid tri-day.

Director Burke noted that one of the things that is so powerful with the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) is the clarity of what is good instruction, and what will have the most impact for students. He believes that is a good path to follow and would like to have more time to discuss.

The meeting recessed into Executive Session at 7:46 pm.

Executive Session: To Evaluate the Performance of a Public Employee

At 7:46 pm, Director Peters announced that the Board was immediately recessing the regular Board meeting into executive session to Evaluate the Performance of a Public Employee.

Director Peters called the executive session to order at 7:52 pm.

All Directors were present. (Director Burke was present via phone.)

Adjourn

At 8:36 pm, the Board recessed out of the executive session and Director Peters adjourned the meeting in the auditorium.