

Board Special Meeting
Oversight Work Session: Transportation

May 22, 2019, 6:00 pm
Auditorium, John Stanford Center
2445 – 3rd Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134



Minutes

Call to order: Director DeWolf, Director Geary, Director Harris, Director Mack, Director Patu, and Director Pinkham were in attendance.

Staff in attendance were: Superintendent Juneau, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Diane DeBacker, and Executive Director Dr. Kyle Kinoshita, Executive Director Cashel Toner, Director Dr. Caleb Perkins.

Director Harris called the oversight work session to order at 4:32pm.

Oversight Work Session: Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction

Director Geary started the oversight work session, and turned it over to Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Division (CAI). Dr. Diane DeBacker, Chief of CAI started the presentation and wanted to acknowledge all of the work that Executive Director Dr. Kyle Kinoshita, Executive Director Cashel Toner, and Director Dr. Caleb Perkins have done for this department. She then gave an overview of the format of the presentation.

Dr. Kinoshita led the session by reviewing the agenda, and when there would be an opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation. He gave a summary of the department functions and how they tied to support the goals of the Strategic Plan. He also talked about how the Board has been supportive of consistent adoption of curriculum.

Ms. Toner then talked about the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, the role of the department and the lens in how CAI approaches the work. Some of the items that she highlighted were:

- Strength – High quality staff with deep subject matter expertise
- Weakness – Limited ability to impact students at the classroom level
- Opportunity – Collaboration with outside partners
- Threat – hard to make long-term planning with the unstable state and federal funding

Dr. Kinoshita talked about the accomplishments of CAI over the past year. One highlight is that while the ELA adoption is still in the early stages, CAI has been able to track student results which are connected to the Strategic Plan.

After this section, Dr. Kinoshita invited the Board to ask questions.

- Director DeWolf – Wanted to have more information around health and fitness.
 - Dr. Kinoshita – SPS has partnerships with organizations such as Cascade Bicycle and Pocock Rowing, which are giving students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to be able to bike and row.
- Director Harris – Has heard that Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) expanding into SPP+, and if the professional development (PD) being provided is commensurate to the additional classes.
 - Ms. Toner - There will be more classes next year (9 to 15), and that this is happening so that classes will be more inclusive. There will be additional training for staff.
- Director Harris – What about SPS and partnerships? Are there formal structures in place for these partnerships? Is Policy 4265 School and Community Partnerships the policy that would apply to this?
 - Dr. Kinoshita - There is documentation for partnerships and that we are do a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with non-profit partnerships. If the contract is over \$250K, then it is presented on a Board Action Report (BAR) that then goes to the Board for approval.
- Director Harris – Do we have House Bill 1599 (HB1599) regarding graduation requirements on the radar?
 - Dr. Perkins - Yes it has already been built into the strategic plan and that in College and Career Readiness they are connected to the House Bill and the Strategic Plan. The end of course (EOC) assessment for science is still important but is no longer a requirement to graduate.
 - Dr. DeBacker - clarified that we were still offering all state assessments.
- Director Mack – Wanted clarification about partnerships. Are partnerships with schools considered district level partnerships?
 - Ms. Toner- No, the partnerships that CAI have MOUs for are done from Central Office, do not control school level partnerships.
- Director Pinkham – Wanted more information about world languages. What are the plans for students to be assessed, and will there be an opportunity to learn Native American languages in schools?
 - Dr. Perkins - This is a good reminder that CAI needs updated guidance to how students can get to 24 credits, and that there is more work to be done.
 - Dr. Kinoshita – Schools don't offer courses that haven't been approved. However, more languages have been approved for competency. Students can sign up to take competency testing and obtain either a credit or a Seal of Biliteracy.
 - Director Pinkham – Wants to make sure that we get the word out on how students can sign up to test for competency.
- Director Geary – Has concerns about the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the wording that goes out to parents around this assessment. This is an assessment of the district, not a pass/fail for students. She has concerns that the district is not doing anything to alleviate the stress.
 - Dr. Kinoshita – One of the functions of Seattle Education Association (SEA) is working with SPS to ameliorate the impacts of testing. The district is working to teaching to standards and are devoted to worthwhile instruction. CAI works on

the theory of action that, “If we provide good instruction, then the test will speak for itself”.

- Director Geary – Would like to see the SBAC assessment as a threat on the SWOT table for CAI.
- Director Harris – Asked about the SBAC and the results – are they are still hiring Craigslist people to grade the assessments?
 - Dr. Kinoshita – The electronic system is supposed to minimize the amount of manual handling.
- Director Mack – On the assessment side the district needs to underscore the nature of the high stakes – students can opt out. There are conversations about the long essays being overwhelming.

Moving on to the next part of the presentation, Dr. Kinoshita went over the organizational chart for CAI. Although there are 12 content areas, this does not represent all of the work that CAI does. Ms. Toner then moved on to the department goals and objectives.

Dr. Perkins talked about the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): how the first two KPIs are tied to SMART goal #3 – Seattle Ready. These 2 indicators will also easily move over to the Strategic Plan. The other 2 KPIs are also critical to the strategic plan.

Dr. Kinoshita moved on to the department’s budget and staffing. This information can be misleading since it is tied to a budget code where some curriculum areas look large, but others small. In the case of the larger teams, many staff are not actually based at the JSCEE.

For benchmarking, Dr. Kinoshita cautioned that when comparing other districts, it is like comparing apples to oranges since districts do not all organize themselves the same way.

At this point in the presentation Dr. Kinoshita invited the Board to ask questions.

- Director Mack – The slide showing budget/staffing it looks as if there is a \$4M underspend; will it be spent down?
 - Dr. Kinoshita - Yes. Costs continue to come in until the end of the year.
- Director Mack – Since the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP), is a requirement, and thought that it would be pushed down into the middle school, is there a plan to start it then?
 - Dr. Perkins – The forms start in 7th grade with the state, but SPS is starting them in 6th grade.
- Director DeWolf – Wanted to more about the budget/staffing for Visual Arts. He wanted to know more about what the budget is paying for.
 - Dr. Kinoshita – there are 12 music teachers and other incidental things; central office pays for staff so that schools don’t need to.
- Director DeWolf – Is the cost for student in the Benchmarking chart pre-levy funds?
- Dr. Kinoshita said he was not sure. Districts are responsible for forwarding total budget information to the National Council of Educational Statistics. Director Patu – For the items that are underspent, are the plans for spending the money? Is there an underspend every year?

- –Dr. Kinoshita- While it looks like there is underspend, by the end of the school year there is very little underspend left.
- Director Harris – For the July 10 Friday Memo, would it be possible to get a report for the 9-10 graders that are not on track to graduate (24 credits)?
 - Dr. Perkins – Yes, they will make sure to send the report.
- Director Harris – On the organizational chart it shows that there is a vacancy for a Satterberg principal; could you please explain?
 - Ms. Toner – CAI is reposting the position. This is for Satterberg. They are looking for a literacy administrator, to work with the 10 feeder schools, organize PD, support the needs of teachers, and will be the connector between school principals and central office.
- Director Harris – Does the department goal for 6-8 grade math implementation include the 6-8 grades in K-8 schools?
 - Ms. Toner - This information includes the middle school portion in K-8 schools.
- Director Geary – Once the district has purchased the ELA curriculum, we roll it out, give PD to schools to find out that 65% of teachers are using it. If we are asking through Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) that we identify students in tiers 2/3 to collaborate through PLCs, when schools have a teacher who is not using the curriculum, what is the strategy given to principals for peer review teams can talk about it in a way that is not uncomfortable but still holds accountability.
 - Ms. Toner – Principals and teachers may be using some of the components, but not all.
 - Dr. Kinoshita – The partnership with Research, Evaluation and Assessment (REA) has shown that some parts of the curriculum were rolled out well, while others not as much. This allows CAI to work on the messaging with principals and executive directors of schools on what to emphasize with teachers. REA has also given results for the end of this year, so will use that to work on messaging to schools in August.
- Director Harris – While it is more equitable to measure student achievement, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), measure growth. At what point do we as a district say that our purchased curriculum which has not shown growth is not working and course correct? Should this be after 5 years?
 - Dr. Kinoshita – If there are gaps in the curriculum, CAI works to fill in the gaps. In the adoption process, the committee studies whether or not they can see the standards in the curriculum and if it teaches in a way to align to standard. At a certain point, the curriculum becomes obsolete and needs to be replaced. This is why CAI developed the 5-year adoption plan.
 - Ms. Toner – Previously, for Math in Focus curriculum, there was not a way to evaluate what success looked like and whether or not teachers were using it. Now, there is a collaborative partnership with REA. Working with REA, CAI is using data with CCC and the middle school math adoption to see if it is effectively implemented by teachers and whether it's having an impact on student learning. There has been success with evaluating CCC implementation, and we adjusted PD for CCC. What we learned from the CCC implementation, we applied to the

implementation of enVision math in the middle school. We are getting better at course correction.

- Director Harris – Are we not evaluating math and focus?
 - Dr. Kinoshita – REA has the plan to evaluate.
- Director Harris – When can we expect to see REA’s evaluation for Honors for All?
 - Dr. Kinoshita - We will inquire.

Dr. Kinoshita and Ms. Toner covered the final part of the presentation: covering the policies and procedures that guides CAI’s work, the key internal and external controls, Major outside service contracts, key information technology systems, and looking forward/next steps. After finishing the presentation, they invited Board to ask questions on the last portion of the presentation.

- Director Mack – Where are we with Policy 2015?
 - Director Geary – It is slow work – The C&I committee has received an outline. C&I is doing a side by side analysis between policy and procedure but have not finished.
 - Ms. Toner – Our next steps are work around policies 2015 and 2022. We will be reframing the work on the KPIs related to the Strategic Plan goals and department thinking through the adoption implementation.
- Director Harris – for the middle school math expense, is that for consumables, and/or outside services?
 - Dr. Kinoshita – The cost is for consumables and services. The \$1.8M is for all 9 years of the contract.
- Director Pinkham – What definition is the district using for cultural competency and responsiveness?
 - Dr. Kinoshita – That is a term that has multiple definitions. What is in common is that teachers are responding to students’ cultures and language differences.
- Director Mack – Where do supplemental contracts live in budgets? Are we paying for supplemental contracts at the district level, or do the supplemental materials contracts live in the buildings?
 - Dr. Kinoshita – CAI doesn’t generally contract for services, the buildings do. We can provide information on what contracts CAI handles centrally.

The session ended at 6:05.

The meeting was recessed at 6:05. The Oversight Work Session on Transportation is to start at 6:15.

Call to order:

Director Mack called the meeting to order at 6:15. In attendance were directors Harris, DeWolf, Geary, Patu, and Pinkham. Superintendent Juneau was present. Director Burke was not able to attend.

The meeting was staffed by Chief Operations Officer Fred Podesta and the Director of Facilities and Interim Director of Transportation Bruce Skowyra.

Transportation

Mr. Podesta opened the presentation by expressing gratitude to Mr. Skowyra for leading the efforts on tactical improvements to Seattle Public Schools (SPS) Transportation department and reducing the

number of late routes. Mr. Podesta thanked Superintendent Juneau for challenging SPS consider the future of the district and consider solutions beyond traditional school transportation programs. He thanked the School Board and the superintendent for highlighting the role of Operations within the new Strategic Plan.

Director Harris expressed appreciation for the work in progress. She also reported that learning about the results of the transportation audit via an article in the Seattle Times was difficult. Mr. Podesta apologized and noted that he had not anticipated the timing of the release of the information. Director DeWolf accepted the apology.

Mr. Skowyra delivered a PowerPoint presentation about the Transportation Department addressing multiple aspects of the team's current work and future goals.

Department Functions

Mr. Skowyra conveyed details about the number of students served, routes employed, and programs supported by SPS transportation. He highlighted the needs of preschool, special education, and students in the foster care system. He reported that the Control Center team is a small staff of six employees working with standard district phones. This team does not have a call center system.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths

Mr. Skowyra described a committed "rock star" team working in challenging circumstances. This team is interested and willing to see and understand change.

Weaknesses

Mr. Skowyra acknowledged a need for cross-training and redundancy within the department. He conveyed the impact of limited resources, such that a setting up a new bus rider requires five to seven days. He plans to address some of the team's needs through a reorganization of staff and the reporting structure, as well as establishing and articulating service levels.

Opportunities

Mr. Skowyra reported that a reorganization of the team was in progress. Staff will also received professional development for the first time in several years.

Mr. Podesta praised the work of Transportation Manager Steve Jones in reestablishing a positive working relationship with First Student. Mr. Podesta confirmed for the Board that some items would not be discussed at the Work Session as contract negotiations with First Student were still in progress. Mr. Skowyra added that SPS and First Student were employing regular face-to-face meetings. The two parties were moving into a performance based contract, instead of liquidated damages.

Mr. Skowyra indicated that the Transportation Department was initiating changes to better understand parents' needs for information about bus routes and services. He reiterated that service levels were being established for all services, such as a standard amount of time to set up a new rider.

Threats/Risks

Mr. Skowyra highlighted three main sources of risk to the department. First, the department is challenged to retain drivers. Second, route planning has been a delayed process in relation to the start of school and involved starting new each year. Third, the department has been working with outdated technology. He reported that SPS is working to implement the First View app for parents to track buses in real time and receive alerts on where a bus is located.

Department Accomplishments

Mr. Skowyra conveyed several successes of the past year. In particular, delayed routes are down from 40 to 10 or 12. He shared that a new Request for Quotation (RFQ) will be issued on May 23, 2019, which includes ideas from the SPS Transportation Think Tank sessions.

Board Questions

Director Geary inquired about route planning software. Mr. Skowyra reported that SPS currently owns the software the department uses to plan bus routes. He also noted that SPS is examining working with First Student to use their software, instead. Mr. Podesta added that bus route software is aligned with the current method of student transportation and focusing on it might be shortsighted, if school buses are phased out in the future. Mr. Skowyra indicated that the department was reviewing the issues of routing software and professional development for routing.

Director DeWolf asked about staff shortages and the possibility of advertising for these positions at high school job fairs. Mr. Skowyra reported that SPS is working with First Student regarding their hiring events and providing potential applicants with the opportunity to drive a bus.

Director Harris asked that the absence of property for parking school buses be included in the analysis as a weakness.

Director Harris reported hearing that SPS does not do background checks on school bus drivers. First Student General Area Manager Greg Newman confirmed that they do conduct background checks on all of our drivers and the state of Washington manages the process and files.

Director Harris referred to the upcoming RFQ for student mobility. She inquired about the “philosophical issues” of alternative modes of student transportation and indicated that organized labor has concerns. Mr. Skowyra explained that the first step is to learn whether any new entities were interested in partnering with SPS regarding transportation. Superintendent Juneau reported that while SPS had met with various parties to learn what exists, additional information is needed. After all the real options become clear, then SPS will assess the philosophical questions. Mr. Skowyra highlighted that the RFQ had already provided new information about the services available through First Student, such as van services with teamsters.

Mr. Skowyra conveyed that the ORCA cards for SPS high school students is managed by a city of Seattle employee.

Director Pinkham inquired about tablets purchased for the buses by SPS in the past. Mr. Skowyra was unfamiliar with that purchase and agreed to look into the matter and report back.

Superintendent Juneau reported that Lime participated in one of the SPS Transportation Think Tank sessions. The business is reviewing its business processes and what it would mean to partner with a school district on student transportation.

Director Geary inquired about surveying students and capturing transportation trends at a given school. Mr. Podesta reported that a survey would be designed in connection with the Strategic Plan and would include transportation. He also noted that SPS is concerned about preventing survey-fatigue.

Organizational Chart

Mr. Skowyra highlighted that one staff person manages all the hourly crossing guards. There are close to 200 guards. He cited this as one example of the need to reorganize and balance the department’s workload. Mr. Podesta added that managing crossing guards at the school level, rather than the central office, is another solution to this particular issue.

Department Goals and Objectives

Mr. Skowyra conveyed that improvement, in time for the start of school 2019, is the department's primary goal. He provided detailed objectives and timelines for this goal.

Superintendent Juneau highlighted that First Student drivers bid on bus routes. She reported that routes that are not chosen serve children of color and Special Education students. She asserted that this is a challenge that requires ongoing review.

Mr. Skowyra highlighted customer service as one of the department's primary objectives. He defined this as timely communication. He indicated that the department may need additional staff and new communication tools to achieve this objective.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Mr. Skowyra reviewed the department's Key Performance Indicators (KPI). He confirmed for the Board that the department is coordinating with Breakfast After the Bell. He shared that every school will have breakfast available and that the new Director of Nutrition Services, Aaron Smith, is working to provide more breakfast options so that more students will eat at school.

Budget and Staffing

Mr. Skowyra explained that Transportation's hourly staff are included in the budgeted dollar amount but not captured in the FTE. Instead, they are reported in the non-staff budget. Deputy Superintendent Stephen Nielsen confirmed that this is an SPS issue that requires improvement.

Benchmarking

Mr. Skowyra reported that benchmarking transportation is challenging because there are few direct comparisons in other school districts. However, he was able to demonstrate that by comparing the percent of total budget SPS is in alignment with other districts the same size.

Policies and Procedures

Mr. Skowyra referred to the relevant Board policies and procedures. Director Mack added that the Transportation Service Standards are approved annually.

Internal and External Controls

Mr. Skowyra referred to the SPS Transportation Service Standards, the state's RCWs and WAC, and the recent audit by the Council of Great City Schools.

Major Outside Service Contracts

Mr. Skowyra conveyed that the district is establishing contracts with taxi cabs for 2019-20.

Information Technology Systems

Mr. Skowyra provided a list of the department's tools and their purposes. He reported that First View will be implemented for 2019-20.

Director Mack inquired about outside service contracts and funding sources. Mr. Nielsen explained that a small portion of funds come from the city of Seattle from levy dollars and athletic fees. He added that funds come primarily from the state. The district is reimbursed for the prior year's expenditures according to a formula. However, the formula was designed for rural areas, not a city like Seattle. Thus far, the state has reimbursed SPS close to 90% each year.

Looking Forward/Next Steps

Mr. Skowyra reiterated work in progress, such as the upcoming RFQ and the reorganization of the Transportation department. He reported recent operational procedure changes such as snow routes, cab assignments, and SPED/MKV route assignment prioritization. He added that monthly verification of ridership will start in 2019-20. He highlighted new work for the department will address how Transportation can work with Special Education to establish proper transportation for students with special needs, such as a cab with the appropriate seat.

Questions

Director Harris inquired about snow routes for special education transportation. Mr. Skowyra acknowledged that there was a lot of work to do to improve transportation during inclement weather. He explained that snow routes are based on main arterials. Therefore, door-to-door service is not always an option. In some cases, door-to-door service can be served by a cab. In other cases, a snow route will not be available. If the student is driven to school, then mileage is refunded. Superintendent Juneau added that the snow days this year prompted cross department conversations about communication. Now, SPS has templates and call sheets for all the possibilities. Plans are also in process for communicating snow routes and ensuring that information is readily accessible all year, not only on a piece of paper at the start of school.

Mr. Skowyra confirmed for the Board that communication from Transportation is translated into multiple languages on the website and in phone calls.

Superintendent Juneau praised the team for the work accomplished.

Director Mack adjourned the meeting at 7:28 PM