



Board Special Meeting

School Board Retreat

September 21, 2019 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Auditorium, John Stanford Center
2445 3rd Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98134

Minutes

Call to Order

Director Harris called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Directors Harris, Hersey, Geary, and Mack were in attendance. Director Burke arrived at 10:01 a.m.

Welcome and Icebreaker

Staff present during the Icebreaker were Ellie Wilson-Jones, Director of Policy & Board Relations; Greg Narver, Chief Legal Counsel; Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Chief of Equity, Partnerships, and Engagement; Dr. Concie Pedroza, Chief of Student Supports; and Erinn Bennett, Executive Director of Government Relations & Strategic Initiatives.

Aaron Walker-Loud, Founder & Director of Big World Breaks, and students of the Meany Middle School BWB Drumline led a workshop with the School Board. Students and Directors introduced themselves and engaged in drumming exercises.

The meeting recessed for a break at 10:47 a.m. and reconvened at 10:56 a.m.

Board Reflection

Staff present during the Board Reflection discussion were Superintendent Denise Juneau; Ellie Wilson-Jones, Director of Policy & Board Relations; Greg Narver, Chief Legal Counsel; Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Chief of Equity, Partnerships, and Engagement; Dr. Concie Pedroza, Chief of Student Supports; Erinn Bennett, Executive Director of Government Relations & Strategic Initiatives; Dr. Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer; and Dr. Clover Codd, Chief Human Resources Officer.

Director Harris introduced the discussion by asking Directors what has worked for them, what did not work, and what they would change if they could.

Director Burke spoke to successes including BEX V; the planning, funding, and leadership of Lincoln High School; and implementation of boundary changes in the northeast. He also noted policy work, the Annual Approval of Schools and focus on school continuous improvement plans, the Board's Ethnic Studies and Career and Technical Education resolutions, the Information Technology Advisory Committee, and specific instructional materials adoptions. Director Burke spoke to the development of a district culture and wanting to adopt a no excuses mindset, ensuring there is multi-year trending of all indicators, disaggregation of data in all reporting, and clarity—clarity in strategic plan, actions, student expectations, and what the Board expects from staff.

Director Geary noted that engagement and clear timelines have been important when controversial decisions are being made and spoke to the implementation of bell time switches and budget

development as successful examples. She stated that long-term planning and continuous conversations have been crucial to bringing the Board along in decision-making. She noted limitations on the Board's ability to have conversations and the importance of recognizing this. She stated that task forces are good but that it is important to keep the Board informed and brought along with their work so that the Board can understand their work and respect the process. Director Geary stated that the city has changed significantly in how it discusses equity and that Seattle Public Schools has been a driver not only in the city but in the country in how equity is discussed.

Director Mack reflected on the intensity of the Board's and district's work. She noted that the district has had a change in leadership and that there is substantial change in the way work is done and organized in the central office. She noted that she is unsure whether there are gaps and whether there is sufficient organizational capacity. Director Mack noted her agreement with Director Burke's statements about the successes over the last couple years and with Director Geary's statement with regard to task forces. She noted inconsistency in how task forces are run and that capacity should be utilized to address this. She spoke to pride in the work of BEX V and decision-making based on data, equity, and guiding principles. She stated that she is proud of the district's work to build quality educational environments as fast as possible. Director Mack noted that she is looking forward to leveraging community expertise with the Capacity, Enrollment and Facility Master Planning Advisory Committee.

Director Hersey spoke about the District VII Director appointment process and what he has heard from the community and how he will communicate with the community about the work of the district. He noted his excitement in joining the Operations Committee and noted that he will be meeting with each cabinet member and that he is actively engaged in learning and building relationships.

Director Harris spoke to communication and community engagement. She noted improvements with engagement but that there is more progress to be made. Director Harris stated that ultimately the focus must be on students and families and the need to be creative in addressing needs. She noted that enrollment forecasting and resolving issues around PTSA funding require additional attention. Director Harris spoke to engaging the Board in the work of task forces and need for greater transparency.

The meeting recessed for a break at 11:30 a.m. and reconvened at 12:00 p.m.

Strategic Plan

Staff present during the Strategic Plan discussion were Superintendent Denise Juneau; Ellie Wilson-Jones, Director of Policy & Board Relations; Greg Narver, Chief Legal Counsel; Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Chief of Equity, Partnerships, and Engagement; Dr. Concie Pedroza, Chief of Student Supports; Erinn Bennett, Executive Director of Government Relations & Strategic Initiatives; Dr. Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Clover Codd, Chief Human Resources Officer; Carri Campbell, Chief of Public Affairs; Dr. Mia Williams, Executive Director of African American Male Achievement; Fred Podesta, Chief Operations Officer; Wyeth Jessee, Chief of Schools & Continuous Improvement; and JoLynn Berge; Chief Financial Officer.

Superintendent Denise Juneau echoed statements from the Board Reflections discussion and noted that she had heard that the district needs to be brave and that there had been conversation around clarity, making sure work is organized, and that people are brought along. Superintendent Juneau spoke to maintaining a focus on equity and to centering on students. Superintendent Juneau noted the Board's approval of the Strategic Plan and highlighted the focus goals for 2019-20 and 13 focus schools. Superintendent Juneau noted work to align the Operations Data Dashboard and Strategic Plan, with the current version coming forward in November and an aligned version following in June 2020.

Superintendent Juneau spoke to how the Strategic Plan replaces the Formula for Success and Smart Goals. Superintendent Juneau reviewed the agenda for the afternoon and noted that updates on additional goals from the Strategic Plan will be forthcoming during future Board retreats.

Executive Director of Government Relations & Strategic Initiatives Erinn Bennett provided an anticipated timeline of key dates for the Strategic Plan and explained that conversation regarding the Strategic Plan will be continued through future Board retreats.

Director Burke asked whether it is the common expectation that the District Scorecard and Operations Data Dashboard are the primary performance vehicles for the Strategic Plan. Ms. Bennett noted that long term these will be aligned with the Strategic Plan, but that this year will be a hybrid with the conversation continuing throughout the year.

Director Mack stated that the November Work Session will be with different Directors than will be serving following the certification of the November election. Director Mack asked whether there will be a process by which the Board will be presented with a new idea for how the data is being reorganized and Board feedback sought. Ms. Bennett noted that in November the current version of the Operations Data Dashboard will be used and that the format will continue to be realigned until June. Director Mack and Ms. Bennett discussed the development of the Data Dashboard. Director Mack requested more information about where this work will intersect with the Board and where the Board will be providing feedback. Superintendent Juneau confirmed there will be conversations with the Board.

Chief of Public Affairs Carri Campbell gave an overview of the work Public Affairs has been doing to support the Strategic Plan. She spoke to work with a research and marketing firm, including focus groups, surveying, and logo development. Ms. Campbell reported on the launch of the Seattle Super Readers Campaign and reviewed Strategic Plan aligned marketing materials with the Board. She spoke to ongoing work to develop a logo and launch a website for the Department of African American Male Achievement, Black Excellence, and next summer reading campaign. She noted that a video will be created regarding targeted universalism. She stated that KPIs are also being developed in collaboration with researchers. Director Burke requested that the Seattle Super Readers video be provided to the Board.

Director Mack noted her excitement with the ongoing work. She spoke to the Superintendent's first day of school message and the emphasis on third graders. She stated that the campaign is amazing but that it can go too far and that there is criticism that the district is not supporting all students.

Executive Director of African American Male Achievement Dr. Mia Williams spoke to the new Department of African American Male Achievement and collaborations with Oakland, which has engaged in similar work. She noted that no achievement gap exists at birth and that the work needs to be broadly shared and centered on that fact. Dr. Williams reviewed the Seattle Excellence Commitments: develop and implement a multi-year plan, put relationships first; uphold Black Excellence and work toward becoming an anti-racist organization; hold students, families and commitments at the center of the work; implement with an eye towards replication and scale; embrace a school, home, and community approach; and take a learning and improvement stance. Dr. Williams reviewed foundational strategies and the relationship to ensuring 100 percent of African American boys are proficient at third grade reading. Director Harris asked for an update on the elders group collaborating on welcoming environments. Chief of Equity, Partnerships, and Engagement Dr. Keisha Scarlett provided an update and spoke to ongoing work.

Directors and staff discussed work to uphold Black Excellence and the Black Excellence campaign. Dr. Williams spoke to hearing from students that they are Black Excellence and work to build on this learning, including sharing the experiences of principals that themselves went through Seattle Public Schools. Ms. Campbell underscored that young people in Seattle Public Schools will be defining Black Excellence, not the staff and district. Director Hersey noted his excitement with the work and reflected back that it is about an entire culture shift. Dr. Williams stated that an African American males student advisory group would be created for middle school and high school students.

Director Harris invited a question from the audience regarding measurements for success. Dr. Williams spoke to the work in the discovery phase to evaluate how African American boys have been successful and work then to replicate those successes. Director Hersey noted his excitement with this work. He asked how stories of students who have left Seattle due to being priced out of the city are also being captured. Dr. Williams confirmed that expanding to other spaces will also be important.

Dr. Williams highlighted future phases and reviewed ways in which work is being leveraged intentionally across departments. Director Harris asked whether the district would be poised to react to Initiative 1000, and stated that it is a challenge to the district to be immediately ready. Chief of Student Supports Dr. Concie Pedroza noted the relationship to Policy No. 0030.

Director Mack noted her appreciation for the presentations to date. She noted that Directors received one-on-one meetings with cabinet members when they were elected and asked that one-on-ones be scheduled on a regular basis for all Directors.

Chief Academic Officer Dr. Diane DeBacker highlighted the 2019-20 Focus Goals and spoke to work related to the third grade reading goal. She spoke about the launch of Seattle Super Readers, with the distribution of 30,000 books. Dr. DeBacker spoke to the convening of a community work group to help the district determine how to approach third grade reading and the development of Seattle Excellence guiding principles. Dr. DeBacker referenced the development of a guide for P-3 practitioners and noted targeted and universal professional development. Dr. DeBacker provided engagement and communications updates including monthly work group convenings. Director Harris asked how dyslexia would be addressed and about the impact of new legislation and the disproportionate labeling of children of color. Dr. DeBacker spoke to how this intersects with broader literacy work. Dr. Pedroza noted that a special education task force would be starting and that the task force would be considering this. Director Hersey asked whether books will be distributed to students each summer. Dr. DeBacker noted that the summer reading program is continuing to be developed and expanded. Ms. Campbell spoke to work underway to identify long-term external funding sources. Director Hersey suggested considering partnerships for electronic books.

Dr. DeBacker reviewed the values and commitments that are guiding the Seattle Excellence work. Director Mack asked about focusing on English Language Learners and access to appropriate books and whether students with special education needs are being considered. Dr. DeBacker noted that ELL has been incorporated into the Teaching & Learning Division, allowing for closer alignment. Dr. DeBacker noted the Comprehensive Literacy Framework and related professional development. Director Harris asked about funding allocated for third grade reading professional development. Chief Financial Officer JoLynn Berge noted that the information would be provided. Director Burke asked about the implementation trajectory for the Comprehensive Literacy Framework. Dr. DeBacker spoke to work with teachers and ongoing workshops. Director Burke noted that the naming of the framework does not clarify what is happening. Dr. DeBacker stated that additional information could be provided in follow up. Director Harris asked whether the workshops mentioned are required, paid, or voluntary.

Dr. DeBacker stated that they are voluntary and that those who attend are paid. Dr. DeBacker reviewed annual targets for third grade reading, baseline data, and the anchor goal.

Director Mack spoke to her experience in sustainability. She noted white norms and racism underly standardized testing and emphasized the need to promote other practices found to work. Director Burke reiterated that there is no achievement gap at birth and spoke to work to understand what happens to drive the achievement gap. Dr. DeBacker spoke to the P-3 investment portfolio and that currently measurements come from third grade but that a better, earlier understanding is needed. Dr. Williams spoke to the importance of talking to and learning from students and using this qualitative data. Director Hersey asked about the district's current phonics instruction in K-5 classrooms. Dr. DeBacker stated that phonics is a component of K-5 English Language Arts curriculum. Director Hersey spoke to the adoption of a system in Federal Way and the impact on retention of reading levels over the summer. He requested copies of the Seattle curriculum for review and asked how curriculum builds across grades and subject areas. Dr. Pedroza noted the Board's prior racial equity training and systemic, structural, and institutional racism.

The meeting recessed for a break at 1:45 p.m. and reconvened at 1:55 p.m.

Chief of Student Supports Wyeth Jessee spoke to safe and welcoming environments in schools and ongoing initiatives. Mr. Jessee reported on a work group that has engaged in this work and the vision that is guiding it. Mr. Jessee described the model of care coordination, with the student at the center and the surrounding supports and services. He spoke to the need for schools and the central office to be highly collaborative, including with professional development, care coordination wraparound services, and preventative and restorative school cultures. Mr. Jessee reviewed metrics that will be used, spoke to how they will be calculated, and reviewed baseline data. Director Harris asked how the district will have baseline data for the student climate survey if the measures are changed. Mr. Jessee stated that assessments are not static as there is a need over time to change questions. Director Mack thanked Mr. Jessee for the information regarding strategies related to attendance and stated that attendance is a metric for something not going right with a student and that this work will speak to addressing the needs of students. Director Mack asked that the work of Everett be reviewed and spoke about district communications to families regarding attendance. Director Harris noted the cost of this work. Director Mack stated that attendance has to do with counting students accurately. Director Burke stated that it does not cost the district to change the tone of attendance outreach.

Mr. Jessee spoke to the update on progress monitoring under Board Policy Nos. A02.00 and 1010 and the alignment of a dashboard to the Strategic Plan. He showed a model dashboard for how information could be presented per school and used in real-time for action planning. Director Harris asked how the dashboard would relate to Homeroom. Mr. Jessee spoke to the integration and how the data could be used. Mr. Jessee spoke about how strategies could be aligned at the school level through the C-SIP process and the development of school goals. Director Burke spoke to the current Board Policy No. A02.00 and how it speaks to levels of school autonomy. He asked what Board oversight would look like. Mr. Jessee and directors discussed progress monitoring and dashboard measurements.

Chief Human Resources Officer Dr. Clover Codd spoke to the culturally responsive professional practice priority and related initiatives. Dr. Codd spoke about course development efforts and work to expand access for educators and described work underway to create a new focus within the Teacher Leadership Cadre program to retain educators of color. Dr. Codd described work related to building leadership teams. Director Mack referenced public testimony at a recent Board meeting regarding racism by building leaders and noted concerns about building leadership and focusing on this at the central office. Dr. Codd spoke about the foundational course series and sessions for principals and

assistant principals. Dr. Pedroza highlighted work to engage central office staff . Director Burke stated that culturally responsive teaching practices should be an entry point for joining Seattle Public Schools rather than what the district needs to provide. Dr. Codd spoke to ongoing work with schools of education and the district’s continuing work with teachers new to the profession. Director Harris asked how many Building Leadership Teams have parents on them. Dr. Codd noted ongoing work by Dr. Scarlett. Director Hersey and Dr. Codd discussed teacher evaluation and accountability. Dr. Codd spoke about the work group working on culturally responsive professional practice and ongoing engagement. Dr. Codd reviewed the targets and baseline data. Director Geary spoke about methods for determining consistent threads in reporting versus cyclical trends.

Chief Operations Officer Fred Podesta reviewed the operations focus areas for 2019-20. He noted the importance of operations in building and maintaining public trust. He spoke to work to finalize the initiative areas and movement toward the work group phase. Mr. Podesta noted the focus on transportation and operational aspects that support early learning pathways. Mr. Podesta highlighted the establishment of two board task forces and competing resource demands. Mr. Podesta described transportation initiatives, including increasing the on-time performance of yellow bus services, improving communications with families and schools, and analyzing transportation service equity. Mr. Podesta spoke about ongoing and upcoming engagement work. Mr. Podesta spoke about the proposed targets. Director Harris asked about real-time technology for identifying where buses are. Mr. Podesta noted a product provided by the vendor First Student and spoke to testing. Mr. Podesta spoke about early learning pathways and relationships to other early learning work by the district. He noted the need for a better understanding of early learning needs with relation to building and capacity planning. Mr. Podesta spoke about cross-departmental engagement work and integration with the Capacity, Enrollment and Facility Master Planning Advisory Committee. Mr. Podesta described the project milestones that will serve as the targets.

Superintendent Juneau provided concluding remarks and spoke about the innovative work that the district is engaged in.

Adjourn

Director Harris adjourned the Board Special Meeting at 3:10 p.m.