

Weighted Staffing Standards (WSS)/ School Funding Workgroup -- Meeting Notes 2021-22 School Year

Meeting Date: December 10, 2020, 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Meeting via “Teams”

Attendees: JoLynn Berge, Linda Sebring, Sara Bonneville, Eric Anderson, Erica Ayer, Laura Davis Brown, Jeff Clark, Clover Codd, Shannon Conner, Lief Esbenshade, Rina Geoghagan, Shelly Hurley, Stanley Jaskot, Sara Mirabueno, Debbie Nelsen, Sheila Redick, Pat Sander, Michael Stone, Farah Thaxton, Keven Wynkoop, Rainey Swan, Jennifer Matter

Agenda:

1. Review Equity Tiering calculation changes
2. A/P Scenario 4 - using student counts for A/P calculations
 - a. 2015-16 formula re-worked for same total A/P allocations as 2020-21 formula
 - b. 2015-16 formula with single weight for Special Education counts
 - c. Create scenario using student counts from tiering
3. Review options for shift to tiering measure for Equity Dollar allocations
4. Discuss potential reductions to WSS. .

Discussion of budget information available in district’s official Budget Book, online on Budget Office web page. Discussion of agenda.

- (1) **Equity Tiering** – Review of last night’s presentation to the board. Overview of methodology and three recommended changes that the committee has previously discussed. . Multi-racial students furthest from educational justice (FEJ). Impact of recommended changes and list of schools under 2020-21 tiering. Background and general information on the tiering, Seattle being somewhat unique in using this data. Board was generally positive on this proposed change.
- (2) **Scenarios for Assistant Principal (A/P) allocation based on student counts** – Overview of weighted student formula options for Assistant Principal allocations (review of variations on “Scenario 4” in materials distributed to workgroup). Discussion on option 4-B being less disruptive. Comment that being “disruptive” should not eliminate an option (4-C) if it is determined that this is the appropriate direction to go. Comment on two-level weighting of special education students (4-A) and single weight (4-B). Comments regarding not losing support needed by kids in schools just because they are not Tier 1 or 2. Noted that the changes modeled do not include the non-traditional schools’ unique models. Asked for show of hands in support of changing to a student-count based model; not enough support shown. A/P model will remain at current method based on number of teachers allocated in WSS plus estimates for Learning Assistance Program and Title I teachers.

- (3) **Models of what 25% shift to Equity Tier calc for Equity Dollar allocations –**
(not discussed – moved to agenda item #4; may revisit this subject for 2022-23 budget allocations)

- (4) **Possible reductions to WSS model / Review of Board Work Session materials –**
Asked last meeting if this workgroup wants to be part of discussions on potential reductions to school funding; the answer was yes; group wants to be part of discussions.

Shared presentation made to the school board last night on financial situation for next year and following years. Timeline showing when decisions need to be made in order for schools to receive their budget allocation by usual time. Four-year forecast from 2019-20 and 2020-21 budget to state has shown that a funding deficit was coming.

Participatory budget activities with selected community groups ongoing and report to board will happen in January.

Three-year outlook and budget options, expenditure increases outpacing revenue increases, resulting in growing resource gap. If we cannot increase revenues, we have to reduce expenditures. Some of the gap can be addressed by “rainy day” (Economic Stabilization) reserve in the District’s Fund Balance, \$38.7M, which is 4% of the District’s prior year annual expenditures per board policy. It can be used, but there must be a plan for how it would be replaced and it will only solve the problem for one year.

Option A, minimize cuts, uses Economic Stabilization and allowable capital levy dollars. Solves the 21-22 problem but does not address 22-23 and 23-24 projected gaps. Use of reserves does not address future years since once used it is gone. Reductions in expenditures reduces problems in the future as well.

Option B, all areas have some reduction. Uses about \$18 M from Economic Stabilization, allowable funding from Capital Fund, and remainder from expenditure reductions in central programs and schools.

Option C & D show other options regarding four areas from which solutions could come from: Economic stabilization, reductions in district program, use of capital funding, reductions in school funding allocation. District level ideas currently include 6 areas (Option School transportation, enrollment reserve, mitigation reserve, infrastructure improvement resources, unplanned curriculum funding, and central office reductions).

Discussion and questions regarding definitions of infrastructure improvements, option school transportation (yellow buses, not Orca Cards), and unplanned curriculum. Comment about desire to see health education added as a content area in the future. Option schools includes Highly Capable Option Schools.

WSS options for reductions: list of school level options that are available; not basic operations or contractually required. Not all are operationally possible; this is a list of what is available. Questions on the two “Above Model Enhancement” items clarified (additional staffing for

Interagency, World School and Middle College; TAF program at Washington MS, extra staff Denny and Mercer due to late special education enrollment change).

Discussion on possible state legislature actions. \$22 M unanticipated loss of revenue due to Covid enrollment drop which we are reducing with our \$6M fall enrollment and school mitigation funds to a balance of a \$16M loss. \$11.6 M funding deficit Transportation revenue based on ridership if we went back to school in January. Legislature may help with Transportation. Not anticipating help with enrollment shortfalls. Legislature may help with Levy calculation with reduced revenues lowering Levy collection threshold. Districts have asked that K-3 ratio requirements be waived; outcome unknown. Need to have a “back-up” plan for budgeting, in case state does not help districts with their revenue and levy issues. Noted that district is pursuing relief from wastewater charges at the city level as well.

Asked if any questions or ideas regarding the school level options. Question on underspends from prior year shown in a previous meeting; discussion on about \$18 M schools underspend 2019-20, between WSS and grants. Noted that conversations have begun with Mike Starosky. Are conversations happening with individual principals to see what they feel (each individually) could do without. Discussion of (city) levy performance pay held for “rainy day” at schools; “percentage to get us through the tough times.” Question about Participatory Budgeting Process how are school leaders involved in the process e.g. Dual Language programs. Experience gap in those conversations. Specific stakeholder groups. Small Schools, hope there is representation for schools where there are lower numbers of black and brown students; those smaller number of students still need help and services. Where (and how) can schools save dollars for these and other needs?

Does anyone have any further questions? Question about if there are other ways district can save, similar to the switch to all electronic paystubs. Are there other things out there? Is there anything this group can do to identify items? Consideration of where the district values lay, budgeting where our values are.

Not making final decisions today. Will set a meeting for first week we are back from the holiday break. If you have thoughts, send them, and we will recap at that meeting.

Meeting adjourned 4:34pm

Final meeting to be set-up for early January.