Seattle Super Reader Update: As you know we launched Seattle Super Readers with a book give-away at our 13 focus schools. This summer I was fortunate to read with young readers at Dunlap elementary and the Team Read partners. This week I met some incoming Maple students and their reading buddies at the Beacon Hill Library. We are so lucky to have Marcellus Turner and the Seattle Public Library as another partner in this work. I have shared this work with local media outlets. I am excited to get our city excited about early literacy!!

Work with the Alliance and Philanthropy: Lisa Chick continues to be a strong ally in our work. I have met with staff from the Raikes, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Casey Foundation to share our early literacy work, with a focus on African American males. They are all excited about the work, especially the launch of the new Department of African American Male Achievement, led by Dr. Mia Williams!

Small Cabinet: Along with the amazing addition of Dr. Williams, I am pleased that the full small cabinet will be in place on September 1. Dr. Concie Pedroza and Greg Narver will both be transitioned by this date. I do want to give a shout out to Ronald Boy for his hard work as Acting Chief Legal Counsel and the entire legal department for picking up the extra load while we found the best person for the job!

Partnership Convenings: As you know, I held the first affinity group meeting with partners who primarily support Native families last spring. Since then, CEO Michelle Merriweather from Urban League hosted me and a group of partners whose work is centered on African American students and families. And, Erin Okuno from SESEC convened a group of CBOs from the Southeast. At each of these events, I shared our strategic plan and the focus goals for the 2019-20 school year. Our community is eager to support our students and staff in this work. Again, we are so lucky to have all these partners who are willing to come in along side us to support our students!

Superintendent’s Leadership Institute (SLI): School leaders were officially welcomed back last week. An amazing team lead a week-long series of trainings for school and staff leaders. The work throughout the week was grounded in racial equity and culturally relevant teaching practices. A huge thank you to Chief Jesse, Mike Starosky, and the principal’s professional development team for organizing the event. It was a powerful learning experience!

Superintendent’s Student Advisory Board (SAB): The SAB presented to school leaders at SLI. They shared a recap of the first year and their projects for next year. They are excited to partner with school leaders (and school leaders were excited) on the 4 projects-Special Education/504, Health Education, Ethnic Studies, and Staff Accountability. This will be their work next year.

Public Relations
I did a brief “back-to-school” live interview on KCPQ morning show and a taped interview for the Take 5 show on King 5 that will air later.
Citizen concern in regard to telephonic meeting participation

On July 11, 2019, citizen Chris Jackins sent a fax to the Attorney General of Washington that raised concern regarding the telephonic participation of Board Directors at the July 10th board meeting. Assistant Attorney General Nancy Krier responded to Mr. Jackins in a letter dated July 15, 2019. Because Mr. Jackins provided a copy of his fax to the district, Ms. Krier also sent a copy of her response to the district. In her response, Ms. Krier indicates that the OPMA does not require the physical presence of a board or commission member in order for a meeting to proceed. Board members may attend a meeting remotely by phone with a conference speaker at the physical meeting location allowing members of the public to hear the discussion. Ms. Krier also indicates that she is not aware of any other laws prohibiting a school board director in Washington State from participating in a board meeting by telephone. In closing, Ms. Krier indicates the Officer of the Attorney General declines to take any further action regarding this matter.
Friday Memo to the Board
Technology Services

Essential Information for the week of August 10-16

Grant for Community Partner Intervention Tracking

On July 31, School & Community Partnerships and Technology Services submitted a preliminary draft grant proposal for $693,406 over two years to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to fund the development of an internal community partner intervention tracking system for the district.

The primary goal of this project is to improve student outcomes through the collection, tracking, and analysis of student interventions, creating a more data informed learning environment. To achieve this outcome, SPS would be developing a tool for community-based organizations (CBOs) and schools to enter and track interventions happening at the student level, which will result in a streamlined reporting system through the district’s data warehouse.

The BAR for this proposal will be discussed during the Audit & Finance Committee on August 19th. The final grant proposal is due to the Gates Foundation by August 23rd.

This project is still in progress, this memo is to provide initial information to Board Directors.
Friday Memo to the Board
Office of Public Affairs

Essential Information for the week of 8/10/19 – 8/16/19

Goal 1: Media Relations


Goal 1: Positive & Strategic Storytelling


Goal 2&3: District Messaging – Outbound Communications, Customer Service

- The district web services team completed annual back-to-school audit to ensure school websites and profiles are up-to-date including new school leaders, addresses, bell times, and key 2019-20 school year dates are easily available.
- The web team posted a news story to all school websites to highlight a critical username and password change that affects all students for the 2019-20 school year.
- The web services team is conducting user testing on a new ADA accessibility web tool and conducting a survey the second half of August. Starting August 19, web readers will see a popup alert inviting them to participate in the survey and contact the web team if they encounter any challenges accessing the website due to ADA accessibility issues.
- Supported tours of Lincoln and Magnolia for board members by taking photos and recording short videos for social media to promote the upcoming ribbon-cutting events.
- The Special Education department is revising the publicly-facing department website, including two rounds of end-user research. The goal is to increase clarity of services, resources, information, ease of access, and usability. The new structure will be live by the time school starts, and they will continue revising the less-trafficked pages throughout the fall.
- Currently, our video switching system, (Tricaster 8000) has been malfunctioning and has become too unreliable to allow for further use. The vendor has been contacted and a new unit will arrive Friday, 8/16 and the install will begin this weekend. The vendor and engineers of the system will be standing by to assist. The unit will be replaced no later than Wednesday, 8/21 to allow sufficient time for testing and adjustments. We will undertake our utmost efforts to ensure a technically smooth Regular Board Meeting on 8/28. As a standard procedure, we will be running a back-up camera in the auditorium to capture the meeting for rebroadcast /web posting in the event of an interruption in the live feed.
Friday Memo to the Board
Operations

Essential Information for the week of 8/12-8/16/19

Capacity Planning
- Chief Operations Officer Fred Podesta, Director of Capital Projects & Planning Richard Best, and Planning Coordinator Becky Asencio were invited to meet with the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) policy group on August 13. The group discussed an opportunity raised by City of Seattle staff to assess a potential site at the former south entrance to the Battery Street tunnel for a downtown school. Because the tunnel is closed, the current right-of-way at Battery Street and Western Avenue will not be needed and the community has expressed interest in the land being redeveloped for green space or a school. City staff approached the district earlier this year about the feasibility of a school and the capital team has worked up “test-to-fit” exercises to determine if the small, steep site could be developed as a K-8 school with a rooftop park and playground. The results of these exercises were positive. The DSA policy group encouraged district staff to continue to work with the City to explore this idea and offered to assist with engaging other community stakeholders.

Student and Community Workforce Agreement Task Force
- Work is under way to form and support a task force to advise the Board whether and how to establish a Student and Community Workforce Agreement. The district’s Contracts team has transmitted requests for proposals to firms that have experience with community workforce agreements and could potentially provide project management and facilitation support. The application for task force members has been drafted and Communications is finalizing it for posting on the district’s website. Chief Operations Officer Podesta briefed the Operations Committee at its August 15 meeting and will follow up with directors to participate on the selection committee as specified in the task force charge.
Friday Memo to the Board
Capital Projects

Essential Information for the week of 8/12-8/16/19

Status of the African American Academy Roof Replacement

- As repairs to the existing roofing system at the have progressed this summer it has become clear that the extent of damage is much greater than was originally anticipated. The District has participated in several meetings the past few weeks with the architects, engineers, envelope consultants and contractor to review/discuss the problems with the existing roofing system and identify potential solutions, confirm the integrity of the existing building structural system, test for potential issues regarding indoor air quality and develop a revised project schedule.

- While corrosion of the metal roof deck was anticipated it is much more extensive than originally thought. The contract contemplated removal rust by abrading and coating and some minor metal roof deck replacement, however it has been determined that it is more cost effective to replace the metal roof deck. More investigative roof test cuts were conducted by the contractor and observed by the architect and structural engineer to confirm the integrity of the existing building structural system. In addition, an environmental hygienist was hired to examine existing conditions and current construction practices to identify any potential indoor air quality issues. Mold testing was conducted both inside and outside the building with same species being found. No indoor air quality issues were identified for building occupants.

- Roof repairs of the north and west wings are now projected to continue until late-November 2019 with occupancy scheduled for winter break. Work on the south and west wings will continue in the summer of 2020. Safety of the building occupants - staff, students and community remains our primary focus.
Friday Memo to the Board  
Teaching and Learning Division  

Essential Information for the week of August 12-16, 2019

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION

Heather Brown Named Director of Early Learning
As we continue to align and expand preschool services, we are excited to announce that Heather Brown has joined us as the Director of Early Learning.

Heather comes to us most recently from Everett Public Schools, where she was the Director of Special Services. While at Everett, Heather managed a range of specialized services, as well as birth to three services and early learning. Heather has worked as Regional Supervisor at Seattle Public Schools, served as an Adjunct Faculty Instructor in Early Childhood at Renton Technical College, and taught birth to three and preschool. Her extensive experience in both early childhood education and special education uniquely prepares her to step into the role of Director of Early Learning. Her expertise in both fields will support innovation, inclusion, and collaboration.

As Director of Early Learning, Heather will be managing Head Start, Early Childhood Special Education, and the Seattle Preschool Program. She will be focused on strategically aligning programming in the Early Learning department, developing community and government partnerships, coordinating professional development, and supporting kindergarten transition. The Director of Early Learning will report to Cashel Toner in Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction.

We are thrilled to welcome Heather to the Early Learning department.

Dr. Thad Williams Named International Education Administrator
We are pleased to announce that Dr. Thad Williams has accepted the position of International Education Administrator with Seattle Public Schools, taking the role that Dr. Michele Anciaux Aoki has skillfully filled for the past five years. In this role, Dr. Williams will lead the district’s work in International Education supporting the district’s 10 International Schools, Dual Language Immersion programs K-12 in Spanish, Japanese, and Mandarin and World Languages taught in grades 6-12.

Dr. Williams was selected from 43 applicants after two rounds of interviews. The interview panel, comprised of representative staff from central office, schools, and the community, were particularly impressed with Mr. Williams’ commitment to racial equity in his work promoting access to high quality language programs.

Dr. Williams comes to us from the Bellevue School District where he was a Multilingual Curriculum Developer and Professional Development coach and has helped lead several key initiatives in the district to promote dual language and world language programs. Before that he worked as a Spanish teacher in Kent School District. He is now a leader and scholar in the larger language learning community in Puget Sound having earned his doctorate from the University of Washington in Language, Literacy and Culture and serving as an instructor at both the University of Washington and Seattle University. His start date will be August 19.

Dr. Michele Anciaux Aoki will be retiring from the district as of September 1, 2019, having supported the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Seattle’s International Schools and Dual Language Immersion programs, as a consultant since 2000 and then central office employee since 2014.