Friday Memo to the Board
Superintendent’s Highlights
For the week of September 3-6, 2019

Seattle Super Reader Update: Because of the start of school, I did not get to share a book with students.

Culturally Responsive Workforce and Safe & Welcoming Environments:

- As staff and I visited W. Seattle Elementary, Rising Star @ AAA, Olympic Hills, WAMS, and many other schools this week one thing stood out of all of us. Our staff worked hard to ensure that students across the district received a Safe & Welcoming Environment. W. Seattle Elementary rolled out the red carpet. Olympic Hills had signs with each student’s name and handshakes/hugs to greet students as they entered the room. WAMS had schedules ready and students in their advisory period for the day. I was very pleased with a positive start to the 2019-20 school year!

Community and Partnerships:

- I attended two more ribbon cuttings this week at Lincoln HS and Queen Anne Elementary. These events show the enthusiasm of our communities. Did you know there are over 28,000 Lincoln Alumni? Wow!

- Dr. Williams and Cashel Toner shared our focused work with donors at the Alliance this week. We are so lucky to have these two lifting the 3rd grade reading goal that focuses on our black boys and their excellence!

- A big thank you to Office Depot for donating hundreds of stocked backpacks and school supplies to students and families at Lowell Elementary school!

Questions from the Board

Are we charging students for tampons and sanitary napkins?

- Sami Hoag, Manager Health Services, reports there are at least two organizations that donate feminine hygiene products for free dispensing to students. She does not believe that we are dispensing through coin operated dispensers, as nurses made supplies readily available.
Friday Memo to the Board
Human Resources
For the week of September 2-6, 2019

Responses to Questions from the Board

Update regarding Crosscut Article

- This week Crosscut ran an article where three families accused SPS of mishandling civil rights complaints. This is a summary of facts that we believe are important for you to be aware of. As you know, the Thornton Creek investigation was multi-faceted and complex. The former Executive Director of Labor & Employee Relations was managing the investigation and it was not completed before he left on January 31, 2019. In spring of 2019, we (HR) found that the TC staff did have the “group” effect of creating a harassing, intimidating and bullying environment towards Ms. Ellis. We found that there was a concerted effort to remove her from site-council leadership. We did not find evidence to substantiate that these efforts were motivated by race. We also did not find that individual teachers discriminated against Ms. Ellis’s child.

- In June of 2019, Ms. Ellis filed a Tort Claim against the District. Ms. Ellis agreed to mediation and during that mediation it was agreed to reopen the investigation into the race-based allegations of discrimination and HIB, due to new allegations brought up during that mediation. That investigation is currently underway, and we have an outside investigator that has been mutually agreed upon by the District and complainant.

- It is important to note that the Office of Student Civil Rights and the Labor & Employee Relations department had 753 allegations/cases of reported civil rights, HIB or discrimination violations during the 17-18 and 18-19 school years. This article represents three families who believe we have not handled their cases to their satisfaction.

Update regarding Recruiting from Chicago Public Schools per email from Director Harris

We have been working to identify the places that will bring the biggest return on investment with our limited recruitment budget. We have been rotating to different regions to identify what, if any recruitment trips will yield significant teacher of color candidates. We have not been to Chicago in recent years. Last year, we focused on the southwest (Texas and Arizona) as well as some midwestern stops (Detroit/Minneapolis). We attempted to visit Chicago, but the big fair they have filled up the first day it opened. In previous years we have also taken trips to New Orleans and Atlanta. We find that our out-of-state recruiting trips do not yield a return on investment. Research shows that teachers rarely move out of state (85% of teachers get their first teaching job within 40 miles of their hometown). We’re also finding that the traditional recruitment fairs that we have attended in the past have dwindling participation, yet still remain costly to travel to and attend. Additionally, this past year we did not have a teacher shortage and were facing teacher layoffs. Fortunately, we were able to recall any impacted staff, but our hiring was very limited this year. We have refocused our efforts to “grow our own” through the Academy for Rising Educators, Class to Cert etc. We are focused on recruiting and hiring educators of color and our paraprofessionals tend to be far more diverse, making this a great partnership between our schools, SEA and community partners. We have had great success with this approach over the last few years, and you have recently approved a new grant awarded to us by the City of Seattle, Department of Education and Early Learning in the amount of $550,000 for these efforts. We’re also proud to report that in the last five years, our teacher of color recruitment has gone from 17% of new hires being POC to 27% with the current cohort of recruits. While we still have much work to do in this area, we have made significant gains.
Superintendent Procedure Update

This week, two new Superintendent Procedures were approved and posted to the district website in support of Board Policy.

The first is 4310SP, Relations with Law Enforcement, Child Protective Agencies, and the County Health Department. This is an existing procedure that was edited in response to information we received regarding recent practices of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), I am proud to announce that the language of the procedure has been strengthened, approved by Superintendent Juneau, and posted to our website. I encourage you to review the updated procedure and please let me know if you have any questions about its application.

In summary, the procedure indicates that as a district we support the Department of Homeland Security and ICE policy that enforcement actions do not occur at, nor are focused on, sensitive locations including schools and school bus stops. Further, absent an exigent circumstance, an immigration official will only be granted access to a district school by presenting a valid judicial warrant that has been reviewed by myself, or another attorney of the district’s Office of Legal Counsel.

It is our hope that this procedure not only provides valuable guidance to school leaders and school staff, but also plays a valuable part in providing welcoming school environments for each and every student attending Seattle Public Schools.

The second is 3224SP, Student Dress. This is a new procedure to support our new School Board Policy. This procedure consists entirely of definitions of the terms used in the policy to help staff apply the provisions. This procedure is unchanged from the draft provided with the BAR for Policy No. 3224.
Friday Memo to the Board
Student Support Services
for the week of September 2-6, 2019

Special Education Department School Support Structure Changes
- The Special Education department, in support of the strategic plan, has worked to
demonstrate a commitment, not to the status quo, but to redesigning our operational
practices to support our colleagues and student learning. Starting this school year, we are
piloting changes in our school-based supervisor and program specialist assignments to
improve operations, customer service, responsiveness, and accessibility. Principals have
been notified of changes in their Special Education contact, where applicable. The
updated Special Education Department assignment document is available upon request.

Special Education Website Update
- The new organizational structure of the Special Education website was made live on
Sunday, 9/1. Information has been reorganized to enhance user experience and ease of
access. You can see the new web structure here:
https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/special_education. We will continue to work
on editing remaining content, prioritizing highly-trafficked pages, through the end of the
month. Revisions will support readability for our web visitors.
Essential Information for the week of 8/31/19 – 9/6/19

Goal 1: Media Relations
- 9/5/19, KUOW, “Sound Transit under fire for student fare enforcement….”
- 9/4/19, Seattle Times, “SPS has a transportation problem. Will this year be any better?”
  https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/seattle-public-schools-has-a-transportation-problem-will-this-year-be-any-better/
- 9/3/19, KIRO, “Seattle’s renovated Lincoln HS reopening for 1st time in decades”
- 9/3/19, Crosscut, “Families accuse SPS of mishandling civil rights complaints”

Goal 2&3: District Messaging – Outbound Communications, Customer Service
- Central office staff are getting excited about how Let's Talk! is helping them do their work more effectively and efficiently, and we are getting several requests from departments to add additional users (we currently have 59 active users and 8 pending users within the district)! Staff are becoming more comfortable using the tool and are having more fun communicating with customers using Let’s Talk! Customer service data shows that when employees are happy, they provide more quality service to the customer and that is evident in the feedback that we are receiving every day. We have an overall district customer satisfaction score of 8.3 (1038 Forms sent - 243 responses - 8.3 average score). See what people are saying below:
  - Feedback score 10: “very quick and helpful response, really appreciated the prompt response and helpful information. Took a lot of stress off my shoulders.”
  - Feedback score 10: “Fast reply and follow-through plus a professional and friendly "can-do" attitude. Nothing better!”
  - Feedback score 10: “The assistance I received today from the tech dept. was timely, professional and most helpful. I sincerely appreciated speaking with the lovely woman who assisted me who's name I can't recall but she is excellent!”
- Communications team supported coverage of ribbon-cutting events at Queen Anne Elementary and Lincoln High School by taking photos and posting to social media, plus media invites and releases.
- Communications team supported coverage of first day of school activities at West Seattle Elementary for the Be There Rally by taking photos and posting to social media, plus media invites and releases.
Friday Memo to the Board
Teaching and Learning Division

Essential Information for the week of September 3-6, 2019

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION

House Bill 1599 – Updated Information

The legislature passed House Bill 1599 during last year's session. This new law makes changes in the pathways students can take to graduate, specific aspects of the High School and Beyond Plan, and assessment requirements. Please note that the latest information on this new law can be found on the OSPI website - these three links provide information on graduation requirements and pathways:

- OSPI's FAQs on House Bill 1599: https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/graduation/pubdocs/Final%20June%202019%201599%20FAQ%20public.pdf

Seattle Public Schools district leadership is also providing input on proposed guidelines that the State Board of Education is drafting to provide further direction with respect to this new law. Moreover, the College and Career Readiness team is drafting district-specific plans for responding to the provisions in the law related to 2-credit graduation waivers, new requirements related to the High School and Beyond Plan, de-linking statewide assessments from graduation requirements, the demonstration of college and career readiness through one of eight graduation pathways, an expedited assessment appeals process, academic acceleration, and high school coursework in middle school (see chart linked here for a summary of these plans). We will bring updates on these plans as well as any proposed Board Policy changes to the Curriculum and Instruction Policy Committee in the coming months.

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Garfield “Honors for All” Study

Research & Evaluation (R&E) is conducting a case study of Garfield High School’s “de-tracking” efforts to improve equitable access to advanced courses and create more blended, less segregated learning environments for 9th and 10th graders in English Language Arts and History/Social Studies courses. This research was formally approved by the Board in December 2018 and is one of the studies listed in our 2018-19 educational research and evaluation work plan.

Teacher interviews and student focus groups were conducted at Garfield in June 2019, and findings were analyzed this summer. In addition, R&E has compiled descriptive student data about Honors for All courses and has surveyed the academic literature on de-tracking.

This preliminary case study is focused on Garfield’s purpose and vision, the challenges associated with effective implementation, and importantly, the perceptions of students. Although we do not attempt to quantitatively evaluate the impact on student outcomes, we expect the study to reveal potential lessons for the District with respect to future efforts at Garfield and other schools to detrack and desegregate learning environments and improve equitable access.

A potential Year 2 of the study can be considered for this coming year and could extend the research to additional case studies and begin to quantitatively assess impact for students. Garfield however just completed its 3rd year of program implementation. Since the first cohort of 9th graders only just completed 11th grade last spring, it will be some time before we have enough longitudinal data to evaluate the longer-term impact on students with statistical confidence.

A preliminary report will be shared internally with Teaching & Learning leaders next week. We expect to incorporate any feedback into a final report to be shared with the Board in October.

To mitigate future confusion about the timing for completing our research reports, the table below provides a general timeline for studies included in our 2018-19 annual plan:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Research Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>Research design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter/Spring 2019</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>Final reports shared with Board **</td>
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** Depending on the study, we often share formative findings internally with District staff much earlier during the year, but, in general, we would not produce an external public facing report (typically, in a PowerPoint format) until the Fall (i.e., beginning of the next school year).