Seattle Super Reader Update:

I was back at Emerson this week for a deeper dive into reading instruction. Principal Rasmussen and her team have a lot going on! They committed to diving in to their reading instruction starting on day 1. They know there is no time to waste. Students in classrooms I visited were engaged in small reading groups that were driven by their reading skill needs. Some were reading on their own, others in small groups, and others with an adult guide on the side. It was nice to see all of them together in one room learning to become stronger readers. In another classroom, 4th and 5th grade students were discussing a reading passage about Cesar Chavez. Then, in small groups, they tackled important topics like racism, pesticide use, and workers rights. Very impressive conversations.

Culturally Responsive Workforce:

Dr. Mia Williams led small cabinet in an activity after reading chapter 1 in “We Dare Say Love: Supporting Achievement in the Educational Life of Black Boys.” Small cabinet will be engaged in this book study learning about Oaklands’ work with African American males and we are committed to name and implement actions in our work that will elevate “Black Excellence.”

Safe & Welcoming Environments:

As you know, students learn to read best in an environment that is safe and welcoming. Emerson staff have been building strong systems and structures since day 1. Students throughout the building know classroom and hallway expectations. During my visit, I witnessed 1st graders sitting in a circle and sharing compliments about their classmates. In another classroom, the teacher asked students, “what does working together look like?” Students responded with phases like, “everyone participating,” “one person can’t take the whole time so we can all get a chance to talk,” and “we work together to get the solutions for what the teacher asked.” We can all continue to learn from our youngest scholars.

Community and Partnerships:

- Some small cabinet members and I met with SCPTSA for our monthly meeting. I look forward to their partnership as we lift the Strategic Plan and build a more anti-racist system.

- I also met with UNCF (https://www.uncf.org/local-offices/seattle) and the new leader of the YMCA about their programs and scholarships and how to better align our efforts to make sure SPS students have full access to their opportunities.

- I held an on-air interview with Bill Radke from KUOW. We discussed a variety of topics. Here is the show: https://www.kuow.org/stories/should-you-be-worried-about-your-cat-eating-your-face-when-you-die. My part of the broadcast is NOT about cats, by the way.

- STEM by TAF at WMS talks continued with the TAF and SPS team. The Joint Operating Agreement is moving along.

- I participated in the inaugural “Women of Color Leading Change” panel at the Woodland Park Zoo. Over 200 audience members learned my leadership story, as well as the stories from other great women of color leaders. It was an inspirational evening.
Friday Memo to the Board
Business and Finance
Essential Information for the week of September 16-20, 2019

Responses to Questions from Board

Question 1 – Question from the August 15th Operations Committee meeting regarding the legal restrictions on deposits and uses of the Capital Eligible Program (CEP) fund and where the restrictions are located in State law and Board Policy.

The Seattle Public Schools Capital Program is funded by local capital levies, surplus facility lease/rental income, and surplus property sales. Facility lease/rental income and property sales are deposited into the non-levy Capital Eligible Program (CEP) fund and all other capital funds are deposited into the appropriate voter approved capital levy fund.

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and Washington State RCW guide Seattle Public Schools deposit and use of real property.

A. OSPI State Accounting Manual – Chapters 5 and 10
   • Chapter 5, Page 17 (Rentals and Leases)
   • Chapter 10, Pages 3-5 (Capital Projects Fund Allowable Expenditures by Revenue Source)

B. Guiding RCWs -
   • RCW 28A.335.130 (Real property-Sale-Use of proceeds)
     https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.335.130
   • RCW 28A.335.060 (Surplus school property-Rental, lease, or use of-)

C. School Board Policy 6882 – Management of Non-essential (Surplus) Properties
   https://www.seattleschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=627&pageId=15293
Responses to Questions from Board

What is the status of the Capacity Enrollment and Facilities Master Planning (CEAFMP) Advisory Committee?

- The draft application for the CEAFMP Advisory Committee has been reviewed and revised by Richard Best, Director of Capital Projects and Planning, Fred Podesta, Chief Operations Officer, and School Board Director Mack.
- At Director Mack’s request, the draft application will be reviewed by School Board Director DeWolf, a representative from Human Resources, and Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Chief of Equity, Partnerships, and Engagement.
- Following the final revisions to the draft, it will be posted and distributed for applications. The application window will be three weeks.
- While the application is open, Director Mack and staff will establish the selection committee and process.
- A Request for Proposals (RFP) has also been drafted to invite applications for a facilitator to support the onboarding and initial meetings of the CEAFMP Advisory Committee.
- The draft RFP is being reviewed and revised by Mr. Best.

What is the status of the Student and Community Workforce Agreement Task Force?

- The application process for task force members was open to the community until September 6 and 26 applications were received.
- Directors Burke and DeWolf met with Chief Operations Officer Podesta this week and agreed to the process and timeline by which a selection committee will finalize the task force membership in mid-October.
- The district’s Request for Proposals for consultants to provide project management and facilitation support for the task force did not attract bidders, so Chief Podesta personally recruited for this position and identified a qualified candidate with deep experience in negotiating and administering community workforce agreements.
- The goal is to have the project manager in place in this month to lead the formation of the task force, design the task force work sessions, finalize the schedule/work plan, and outline the task force report.
Friday Memo to the Board  
Office of Public Affairs

Essential Information for the week of 9/14/19 – 9/20/19

Goal 1: Media Relations
- 9/18/19 Seattle Times “South Seattle has a new representative….”
- 9/18/19 Seattle Times “I would appreciate a heads-up…”
- 9/18/19 KIRO 7 “How to protect against local ransomware attacks”
  https://jessejones.com/jesse-explains-how-to-protect-against-local-ransomware-attacks/

Goal 2&3: District Messaging – Outbound Communications, Customer Service
- Communications Team supported coverage at Emerson Elementary School, where Seahawks and United Way volunteers dedicated their time and resources to the Seattle Super Readers strategic plan goal, by taking photos and posting to social media.
- In support of the Seattle Super Readers goal, the Communications Team posted a story and tips on early literacy practices implemented by preschool staff in partnership with families.
  https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/preschool_literacy_practices
- Supported communications for the announcement of the appointment of the new District VII School Board Director, Brandon Hersey, by taking photos of the swearing-in process, posting to social media, and sending a press release.
- Supported principal and district messaging around student walkouts for the September 20th Climate Strike.
CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION

Proposal from Audible
Audible, a seller and producer of spoken audio entertainment, information, and educational programming on the Internet, reached out to Seattle Public Schools to offer free licenses to a subset of students within Seattle Public Schools. The licenses can provide students access to some of the audio/print versions of the assigned English Language Arts texts by phone or a different device such as a kindle, iPad or laptop. The educational benefit of Audible is: 1) the audio version of the assigned texts can support students’ comprehension and engagement in the assigned reading; and 2) the downloadable text selection can provide access to students to a wide-range of independent reading that can meet students’ unique and varied interests. The offer of free licenses would begin this fall and extend for an indefinite period of time, but no less than one entire year and likely several years beyond the initial year. In addition, while Audible is a subsidiary of Amazon, representatives from Audible have indicated to SPS that this offer would not be connected to a commercial pitch.

After considering their offer, SPS would like to accept this offer and provide 3,000 free Audible licenses to 9th and 10th grade students and their teachers in five of our high schools—Chief Sealth, Cleveland, Franklin, Garfield and Rainier Beach. Our interests in providing easily accessible books to high school students is to increase the amount of independent reading for high school students in these schools and to provide more opportunities for students to select books that are more reflective of their experiences, customs and cultures. The focus on these five schools would, of course, would be consistent with the SPS Strategic Plan 2019-2024.

As part of the program, participating students 13 years of age or older as of September 1, 2019 currently enrolled in grades 9 and 10 along with their ELA and Social Studies teachers will receive an Audible account providing free access to a collection of 80 titles commonly used in grade 8-12 curricula. Many of these titles will be offered with Captions, a feature enabling students to follow-along with a few lines of computer-generated text as they listen to the audio performance as well as click on words to see definitions, Wikipedia entries, and translations into over twenty languages. Participants will be able to access their accounts in school or at their home via their personal smartphone.

In addition to the School Collection, all participants will receive 12 credits (also free) which can be used to download 12 titles that they desire from the Audible catalog of over 450,000 titles. This will provide our students with the opportunity to pursue topics and genres of interest, beyond classroom curricula. Most students will use their smart phones, and those that do not have their own devices will have access to a limited number of refurbished Kindles made available to schools via Audible. Additionally, Audible will make available some of the titles on our high school reading lists so that students can access digital books whenever their phones are nearby. Participating teachers will also receive onboarding resources (how-to videos, user manuals) and tips for usage, along with your new account, which will help ensure a smooth onboarding experience.

To vet this proposal and to ensure that we are fully ready to help these schools benefit from this new resource, SPS staff have taken or will take the following steps:

1. Consulted with SPS Legal and asked Ronald Boy to vet the proposal and accompanying documents.
2. Requested “safe filters” for mature content.
3. Researched and examined past practices with Seattle Public Libraries to communicate availability of broad content to SPS high schoolers
4. Requested and received a letter from Audible documenting that the gift of Audible licenses was well under $250K threshold. Completed a grant proposal per guidance from JoLynn Berge.
5. Met with Instructional Technology to review the scope of work involved with Audible licenses and to ensure that SPS can technically support access to this resource at these five schools.
6. Drafted and will send model letters to the five high school principals for them to use to communicate with teachers and parents on the opportunity. The letters to parents will include information on how to opt out for concerned parents to sign.

In addition, we are including a link to the Audible proposal: https://seattleschools-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/cbperkins_seattleschools_org/ERKPCsp5SodDi32FhRcoCBABBnfrJonRrE_4NfGi9kF9d3Q?e=7QF0Ux. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer at dmdebacker@seattleschools.org.