Seattle Super Readers Update: I visited Thurgood Marshall Thursday. Their motto this year is “Strengthening Our Core.” I was in a 1st grade and a 2/3 split-grade classroom during my visit. Students in both classes were building their academic vocabulary using sentence starters in writing lessons. Strong writers are often strong readers.

Culturally Responsive Workforce: Principal May and her staff read Fostering Resilient Learners this summer. This book provides educators with trauma informed practices and strategies to use with students. The book also shares self-help strategies for teachers so that they can bring their best selves to support students.

Safe & Welcoming Environments: Students at Thurgood Marshall were engaged with each other in a collaborative manner in each classroom I visited. Each classroom utilized the “turn & talk” strategy to build community and de-privatize student thinking. All of the students were engaged in conversations with their peers.

Principal May shared that staff had been working hard the first month of school to build strong learning communities. As a result of this work, one student reported, “I’m in the green!” (referring to RULER – SPS SEL curriculum).

I talked with Thurgood Marshal staff after school. They were thankful for our bold Strategic Plan. In particular, they love the word “unapologetic.” They feel like this word gives them the permission to do the work necessary to ensure that African American boys thrive at Thurgood Marshall.

Community and Partnerships:

- Central Office and TAF staff (and Director Harris) met with staff at WAMS. We answered questions and shared more details about TAF.

- Principals convened for their first LLD of the 2019-20 school year. The work for the day was grounded in the 2019-20 Strategic Plan initiatives of 3rd grade reading, safe & welcoming environments, and culturally responsive teaching. We are off to a focused start!

- I shared our bold Strategic Plan (Seattle Excellence) to Seattle Public Schools’ Retirees’ Association. They are excited to partner with us in this work.

- With Dr. Williams leadership, Small Cabinet continued their book study.

- I updated the Alliance for Education Board of Directors of our work toward Seattle Excellence. Dr. Williams shared the hopes and dreams for the Department of African American Male Achievement.

- I spoke to a packed room of community partners at the 2019-20 kick off. They are excited to align their work to Seattle Excellence and are very enthusiastic to support African American boys.

- I attended the Chief Seattle Club luncheon and will be speaking at the Alliance for Education Black & Orange Gala on Saturday. Hope to see you there.

- This weekend, the Superintendent’s Student Advisory Board resumes its work. I am excited to see them!!
Friday Memo to the Board
Operations – Nutrition Services

Essential Information for the week of Sept. 30- Oct. 4, 2019

Operations Issues

- While daily meal counts through the month of September continued at expected levels, Nutrition Services continued to investigate and address food supply and other operational issues, descriptions of which are provided below.

- One of the district’s major food suppliers underwent a major merger over the summer, which impacted ordering procedures (product numbers, order dates, stocking) and the delivery of ordered products. Nutrition Services has been working with various SPS departments such as the warehouse, the ordering system team, and the purchasing department to correct issues with ordering procedures and implement efficient inventory controls.

- The district started the 2019-20 school year with lower than normal inventory due to construction on the Central Kitchen freezer over the summer, which required Nutrition Services to draw down frozen products. Nutrition Services has worked with the vendor to re-stock the inventory, including items that will be implemented on the new menu.

- There have been payroll issues, particularly accounting for training hours for staff returning at the start of school. Nutrition Services staff is working with Payroll and employees to correct timekeeping and pay issues and issue manual pay warrants as needed.
Responses to Questions from Board Regarding policy and procedural gaps with respect to discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying allegations.

The Human Resources Division has reorganized staff to better support schools in handling complaints/cases.

HR and Investigations & Compliance are partnering with Legal to identify procedural gaps and makes revisions as necessary to various Superintendent Procedures. Please note that changes to the student HIB policy/procedure (3207) are limited as districts are required to adopt the state’s model policy and procedure. Per OSPI, the District is required to revise the nondiscrimination complaint procedure (3210SP.B and 5010SP) to remove the requirement for a complainant to have to provide a signature for a written complaint to be considered formal.

Reports of alleged misconduct of this nature (HIB, discrimination, sexual harassment) can be taken through a variety of methods – verbal, in person, email, District complaint forms, ethics hotline, etc. as detailed in the various procedures. HR and Investigations Team continue to work with and train school building leaders to report incidents to HR when the incident involves a staff member (either Complainant or Respondent) in a timely manner even when the complaint is informal (verbal). Informal complaints can be handled by worksite supervisor. We presented at October Principal and Assistant Principal LLDs to detail the central office investigation staff re-organization and information about civil rights compliance and investigation skills.

Yes, worksite supervisors are being asked to conduct investigations of informal complaints/reports, particularly school building leaders. It is a reasonable expectation for a supervisor to address low-level reports/complaints. Additionally, as it pertains to student-student misconduct, only school building leaders have the authority under state law and District policy to impose any corrective action toward a student. As a note, any formal complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment is investigated by a central-office based investigator. As HR and Investigations Team align the complaint resolution processes (from OSCR and HR), then additional training will be rolled out to provide more capacity for worksite supervisors to engage in informal conflict and complaint resolution.

With respect to the sexual harassment policy and procedure specifically – the District is currently fielding a task force, 2019 Title IX Task Force, to review District policy, procedure, protocols, and practices regarding District response to reports of sexual harassment/sexual assault. Any proposed revisions to policy and procedure will be submitted to the Board for review. Based on request by members of the task force and volume of information – including subcommittees involving generating listening sessions with students –, the date it will provide those recommendations is anticipated to occur Fall 2020.

We have recently changed our practice so that allegations for the following types of cases will be handled by a central office investigator (as opposed to a site supervisor/principal/Program Manager):

- Any sexual harassment/sexual assault complaint where the respondent is a staff member
- Formal discrimination complaint under Policies 3210 or 5010
- Allegations of boundary violations
- Assault of student by staff member
- Theft of district property/resources
- Policy 5006 allegations (unprofessional conduct by certificated staff member)
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

School Reports
In the Fall of each school year, Research & Evaluation (R&E) has partnered with Business Intelligence (BI) to produce annual School Reports that are made available to the public on the Seattle Public Schools (SPS) website (link). These reports were originally released nine years ago (Fall 2010), and apart from a few minor edits, have not been substantially altered in form or content since then.

R&E and BI met with senior leadership to consider options for this year. A decision was made to not produce the legacy School Reports this year, and to revisit a potential new design next year in alignment with the new Strategic Plan. Primary considerations included the fact that producing the legacy reports would impact key deliverables for the new Strategic Plan this fall for R&E and BI. Redesigning the reports this year was not considered feasible given the substantial commitment of resources required from both the BI Team and R&E team, which again would impact other planned projects this year.

Fortunately, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has significantly improved its web-based data portal (“OSPI Report Card”) from which multiple data points for any SPS school can be viewed or downloaded (link). The latest school climate survey data is also available on the District website (link). Rather than divert SPS resources to maintaining a legacy report or undertaking a major redesign effort this year, the decision was made to instead provide the public with a direct link to OSPI Report Card from the District website. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer at dmdebacker@seattleschools.org.

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION

Strategic Goals 4 (9th Graders On-Track for Graduation) and 5 (Graduating Ready for College and Career)
The Department of College and Career Readiness would like to provide an update on our Strategic Goals Work Group, and on our most recent 9th grade on-track numbers.

We held our second work group meeting on September 23rd and will be holding our third meeting on October 7th. Our work group’s timeline is oriented around two key dates, the template submission deadline on October 18th, and the School Board retreat on December 14th. We are deeply grateful to our work group for their participation in these meetings.

Although 9th grade on-track is a goal in the new Strategic Plan, our department has already been working with school to increase our on-track rates and has been closely monitoring freshman year credit attainment. As of June 2019, 15.4% of our 9th graders had earned fewer than 6 high school credits and were therefore off-track for on-time graduation. Proportionally, Native American, Hispanic/Latinx, and African American 9th grade students were more likely to be off-track than students from other racial/ethnic groups, and male students were more likely to be off-track than female students.

For more details on both of the topics above, please click on this link: https://seattleschools.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/communities/teachandlearn/TLChiefs/EcoPx1Fl5ilEjXzwY_vUm9IBuzOaWtjfcKJGR1qjR6C80w
Enrollment Planning: Southeast Middle School Boundaries

**Q:** There has been conversation about moving an elementary feeder school from Mercer Middle School to Washington Middle School. Director Harris asked what is the status of this conversation?

**A:** There are no planned middle school changes for the 2020-21 school year. There have only been discussions and engagement around southeast elementary school changes for the **2020-21 school year** which would not impact middle school boundaries. Potential boundary changes for the **2021-22 school year** would impact Mercer Middle School and Aki Kurose Middle School given potential changes between Rising Star and Wing Luke’s boundary. No changes to middle school feeder patterns are being discussed at this time between Mercer and Washington Middle School given the potential implementation of the Technology Access Foundation (TAF) at Washington Middle School in the 2020-21 school year. Staff will evaluate the impact of TAF on enrollment at Washington Middle School before recommending any changes to the middle school feeder patterns.

Advanced Learning: Customer Service and Support update

The Advanced Learning (AL) Team is focused on customer service and school support; focusing efforts on streamlining work through systems and procedures; freeing up time for support of schools and families in alignment with the 2019-24 SPS Strategic Plan.

**Customer Care Team** – The AL Customer Care Team has a goal of responding quickly and efficiently to parent/community questions. We are piloting the “Let’s Talk” application in order to track communication involving inquiries to SPS. Many families utilize their direct connection to AL by using the web link or phone number.

**Referrals** – The referral window closed at 5:00 p.m. on September 24th. We know that many families use The Source for referral and receive updates on The Source; however, our families that are furthest from educational justice often need support to access the referral process.

Last spring, the AL team increased communication with elementary and K-8 schools and families through development of a customer care team, updating the AL website and the internal procedures and timelines for communication. Program Specialists connected with all elementary schools in the spring, providing them with referral posters, clarification around the referral window and referral forms in 9 languages. Teachers were contacted through Schoology pages and provided guidance about the referral process and partners across central office helped schools with guidance to support families referring their children for consideration.

SPS Students Referred: 4,969      Non-SPS Students Referred: 303

(Demographics will be shared along with comparison to 2018-19 referrals in the next update)

**School Support** – The AL Program Specialist Team gathers and analyzes data from schools and programs around HC and AL; responding to AL questions from families, teachers, and leaders. They are a thought partner with schools; working to align with the strategic plan and provide a strong, differentiated platform of services for their students. They work closely with content specialists to develop guidance, training, and support for schools.

We look forward to our continued growth as we support courageous change that will result in meeting the needs of every student in Seattle Public Schools.

The AL Program Specialist Team includes the following staff members: Deenie Berry, Supervisor; Jackie Cable, Assistant Manager, Student Supports (AP testing, Secondary Support); Maki Ichikawa, Program Specialist, 2E; Nathan Wheeler, Program Specialist, Elementary. Secondary specialist position is temporarily vacant.
Friday Memo to the Board
Office of Public Affairs

Essential Information for the week of 9/28/19 – 10/4/19

Goal 1: Media Relations

- 10/2/19 Seattle Times “After tumultuous bus service, SPS agrees to a relatively…..”
- 9/30/19 KNKX “SPS officials propose advanced learning changes…..”
- 9/29/19 Seattle Times “Thousands of WA students could soon be barred from school…..”
- 9/28/19 Seattle Times “A school bus carrying two Seattle preschoolers hit a car…..”

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

- Throughout October the web services team is presenting five web editing workshops to help train web editors and collect feedback on the website content management system (CMS). The workshops include an overview of managing school and department webpages and answering specific questions editors may have. During these sessions, the groups will participate in a focus group to provide feedback on our current web editing tool, SchoolMessenger Presence CMS. This feedback will be used to ensure our current and future CMS solutions will meet the needs of our web editors who manage the district and school websites.
- We have completed the transition from the capital levy websites that were hosted by an outside firm. Construction project information can now be found at www.seattleschools.org/construction. Because of ADA-compliance, we have not posted the PDFs that were on the former sites, however, those PDFs were provided to Archives. We are working with Capital on standards for what will be posted and for how long, as well as a method to provide access to older materials. This change allows more control over content, consistency with the district website, and reduces costs.
- Let’s Talk “Dialogue Age” continues to be low at 1.3 days on average for dialogues to be closed; meaning staff are responding quickly.
  o SPS added a new way for families and staff to provide feedback on the Green Lake Capacity work. We are receiving lots of valuable feedback as well as compliments from concerned community members.
  o Two Let’s Talk user trainings were held on September 27 and October 3 to continue to support new district users.