Friday Memo to the Board
Superintendent’s Highlights
For the week of November 12-15, 2019

Safe & Welcoming: This week I visited Martin Luther King (MLK) Elementary. Students shared some of the Social Emotional Learning they are leading at the school. A group of 4th and 5th graders explained how they spoke to the entire school over the intercom and how scary it was, but how they overcame that fear and felt so good about the experience. They taught their peers about importance of self-awareness and being a self-manager. I so enjoy hearing from our young leaders and appreciate our staff for creating these powerful experiences for our students! Thank you MLK staff!!

3rd Grade Reading: MLK teachers are using data from a variety of sources to know each student’s reading story, strength, and need. They bring the students and families alongside in this work. Students know their reading scores; they set goals, and create plans about how to get to the next reading level. Teachers are using a strategy called “close reading” to help students understand complex text. Under the leadership of Ms. Carter (Assistant Principal) and Dr. Scott (Principal), this team is laser focused on reading!

Culturally Responsive Practices: Principal Scott and his team are building culturally responsive classrooms throughout the school. I was fortunate to sit in two closing circles that occur in classrooms at the end of the school day. The 5th graders were building a vocabulary chart - “1000 dollar feeling words.” For example, they were providing the teacher with better descriptor words than “excited” – swapping instead with words like “exhilarated” and “enthusiastic” to explain how that emphasizes their feelings. The 3rd graders shared with each other the best part of their day. They were so sweet-many said, “meeting Superintendent Juneau.” I’m going back to MLK for my own daily affirmations! Dr. Scott shared that almost 100% of the classes at MLK do an opening and closing circle each day to build community.

Community and Partnerships:

- I had a couple of great meetings with local community leaders about equity and coalition building. They are committed to supporting my leadership and our work to be more inclusive and equity focused in our policies to better serve students furthest from educational justice. I re-committed to each of these groups my resolve to bring Seattle Excellence to fruition and continue building a longer table to serve our students. I’m so thankful for these conversations!

- I met with Mayor Durkan at our monthly meeting. We discussed TAF and Memorial Stadium.

- Our data, research, and teaching & learning teams are deep in the process of building out robust data dashboards that meet the needs of students, families, teachers, school leaders, central office staff and the school board. I am proud of the focus these teams have on Seattle Excellence.

- The Alliance for Education hosted a gathering to celebrate my first year in Seattle and our bold work to serve African American students by changing our systems and practices. As a result of this partnership, we have 2 new positions posted to support the Department of African American Male Achievement. Thank you, Alliance for Education.

- Dr. Codd invited me to drop in to thank the Peer Assistance Review (PAR) team for their commitment to ensure every student gets a high-quality educational experience.

- My team talked with Superintendents from across the state to prepare for the upcoming State legislative session. I appreciate the partnership of districts from across the state as we advocate for all WA students.
Friday Memo to the Board  
Teaching and Learning Division  

Essential Information for the week of Nov. 12-15, 2019

**CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION**

**Support for the PowerTeacher Pro Implementation**

Seattle Public Schools moved to a new online grade book in the 2019-20 school year at the elementary and secondary level called PowerTeacher Pro. This new system means some functions will look different and some practices will have to change. For example, at the elementary level, content changes reflect updated curriculum and standards expectations, including social-emotional learning content and Next Generation Science Standards. At the secondary level, a systemwide use of a total points gradebook and continuous semester grading will enable students and families to better understand grades.

We spent last year preparing for this roll out, getting input from a number of stakeholders, including an advisory group formed with Seattle Education Association (SEA). This year, the Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction (CAI) department and the Department of Technology Services (DoTs) are collaborating to support the implementation of PowerTeacher Pro and help teachers with these changes. A newly-formed team across these two departments have started the work of creating internal processes and procedures related to the collection of feedback, and the communication of systemwide changes. Specifically, they have developed and implemented a process to respond to questions, issues, and concerns that come up during implementation. Here is an overview of the steps of the process:

**Step 1:** A staff member contacts the Ed Tech representative from their building if they are experiencing any navigational issues.

**Step 2:** If the Ed Tech representative is unavailable or their concerns are related to design, glitches, or policy and procedure, the next step is to reach out to the Digital Learning Specialist supporting their school. Collectively, they would review the issue and resolve it, or create a Tech Ticket to escalate the concern.

**Step 3:** Once created, a DoTs team member works to address the issue and forwards the ticket to either the DoTs technical or the CAI team. All policy related issues are forwarded to point people in CAI. Once an issue comes to their desk, they start an investigation to determine the factors and stakeholders impacted by the issue. They then determine next steps and our formal response.

This team has already been investigating a number of issues and have grouped these issues into three categories: 1) Issues we need to address immediately given their effect on the grades and messaging to students and their families. 2) Issues we are not able to address immediately but will consider changing in the coming months or possibly during year 2 of implementation. 3) Issues that connect to larger philosophical, programmatic, or policy questions that may not change given the original plan for rolling out PowerTeacher Pro. We are still gathering feedback to ensure that the original intent of these changes is resulting in improved communications to students and their families.

Our goal is to ensure all Tech Tickets get a response within 2 business days. In addition, we plan to work with teachers to help us determine the most efficient communication channel for updates, including possibly sending out a quarterly update summarizing questions we have received and how we are responding to these questions.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer at dmdebacker@seattleschools.org.
Friday Memo to the Board
Office of Public Affairs
Essential Information for the week of 11/9/19 – 11/15/19

Goal 1: Media Relations

- 11/12/19 Seattle Times “Middle school dance draws criticism for excluding kids with low grades” [https://www.kuow.org/stories/middle-school-dance-draws-criticism-for-exclusion]

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

- Press release crafted for Seattle Public Schools joining a lawsuit against Juul. [https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/lawsuit_against_juul_labs]
- Website Improvement Project launched: [https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/website_improvement_project]
- Volunteer Department Navigation Study: The web services team is working to improve the navigation for the Seattle Public Schools Volunteer Services Department. Navigation testing helps us understand how our families, staff, and larger community would organize information on our website. You can help by completing this 10-15 minute online activity by December 2, 2019. Your participation is appreciated! [https://ows.io/tj/7vlg786q]
- Strategic plan posters printed, Seattle Excellence brochure finalized, and website updated: [https://www.seattleschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=627&pagId=15618]
  - Seattle Excellence was also added to the main navigation buttons on the homepage. In addition, marketing materials to support diversification of staff were finalized.
Student Support Services:

The Student Support Services’ Leadership Team meet monthly to collaborate and strategize around the strategic plan and have a focus on our racial equity analysis. The team is currently reading and discussing “How to Be an Antiracist” by Ibram X. Kendi. Readings take place prior to the meeting in order to provide thought process and integration into our discussion of how his teachings enhance our mutual work; both within Student Support Services and within the district.

Athletics:

The Athletic department has created working committees for Scheduling and Public Relations Campaigning. The committees consist of members from the athletics community and will provide enhancement recommendations to the department.

Athletics continues in its expansion of girls’ sports to our middle and high schools. Recent additions include Washington Interscholastic Athletics Association (WIAA) affiliated bowling and slow-pitch softball.

Advanced Learning:

The Advanced Learning Task Force will complete their recommendations to the Superintendent on December 10th. The next steps for the Advanced Learning department include distribution of applications for membership on the Highly Capable Racial Equity Services Advisory Committee (HC/RES Advisory). This diverse team will meet every 4-6 weeks, beginning in January, and will advise the Advanced Learning Department in next recommended steps for Seattle Public Schools. Information and applications for the HC/RES Advisory will be distributed by the end of next week and applications are due by December 13th.