Friday Memo to the Board
Superintendent’s Highlights
for the week of December 9-13, 2019

Safe & Welcoming: This week I visited Olympic Hills Elementary (OH). Thank you, Director Rankin, for joining our learning walks. This school has a lot of great work going on! Staff leadership and student voice guide everything at OH. Their Racial Equity team is using student climate data to build staff PD that aligns to the data. They are also engaging students in all grades about what makes a welcoming environment for them. Principal DeBell and her team are in the process of turning staff room into a family resource room. They are holding affinity group meetings to design the space. Everything at OH is very intentional and driven by data. The staff, in part because of Principal DeBell’s strong leadership, centers their work on students and families of color furthest from educational justice.

3rd Grade Reading: The OH team spent last year re-building their tier 1 instruction after they saw a decline in student data. As a result, all grades and all subjects saw gains in the SBA data from this past spring. The staff credits these gains to their commitment to using data to guide their instruction and staff collaboration. For example, the 5 K classroom teachers meet weekly to align their lessons. They utilize a variety of strategies to build super readers, including small group instruction, vocabulary lessons, writing, and pair-shares. In each classroom I visited, students were 100% engaged in the lessons.

Culturally Responsive Practices: Principal DeBell and her team are committed to growing their culturally responsive practices and holding each other accountable. Starting in January, staff are conducting peer observations. The data they will gather is around student participation. This data will help teams see gaps and strategize to grow their practices. The data will be specific to black boys and students furthest from educational justice.

If you have not visited Olympic Hills, you are missing out. Principal DeBell and her staff are district leaders in this work. Thank you Principal DeBell and OH staff!!

Community and Partnerships:

- I met with transportation and nutrition services departments this week. They are working hard to be more predictable in their services. They are also engaging students furthest from educational justice to seek ideas to make improvements. Shout out to Aaron and Jeff for their leadership.
- I held independent monthly meetings with PASS and SEA this week. Both teams are committed to create Safe and Welcoming Environments for staff and students.
- I spent a great deal of time learning in partnership with Chris Chatmon this week. He held time with small cabinet members and lead the extended cabinet meeting. His leadership will help us become more transformational in support of Seattle Excellence.
- I thanked the Advanced Learning Task Force for their 18 months of service. I look forward to reviewing their recommendations in January.
- Shout out to the Alliance for their holiday gathering this week!
- I am preparing an “Edutalk” and am thankful for our partnership with UW.
- Shout out again to our new officers, President DeWolf, VP Hampson and Member-At-Large Harris. I look forward to our continued partnership to lift Seattle Excellence.
Friday Memo to the Board
Schools & Continuous Improvement
For the Week of December 9-13, 2019

Update on Meeting State Immunization Requirements

Health Services will send Immunization exclusion packets (translated in 6 languages) by US mail to families on December 16. The Office of Public Affairs will follow up by sending translated School Messenger notifications. Administrators will receive an updated exclusion roster for their school on January 6. **Exclusion date is January 8, 2020.** Principals or site administrators are responsible for the act of exclusion. School Nurses

Compliance means that the student is fully immunized, in process of getting immunized, has laboratory reports indicating that they have immunity to a disease or has a signed Certificate of Exemption on file. All students may access the 28 school-based health centers to get immunized once enrolled. All students (age 3-18) can receive free vaccinations at two special clinics hosted at Aki Kurose Middle School on December 27 and 30 from 9:00 am-3:00 pm. As of December 10, there are 6 schools who have no exclusions. **See here for additional resources.**

**Actions to date:**

- Phone calls to identified families using interpretation services when necessary, including on weekends and after hours
- Updating the rostering of immunization list through school nurses since May of 2019
- Informational sessions and e-mail notifications with school leaders since August of 2019
- Updating information about community resources related to immunization on the district website
- Mailings to identified families with information about immunization requirements by the state and community resources to meet those requirements
- Ongoing collaboration with King County Public Health, community-based health organizations and the City of Seattle
Friday Memo to the Board
Operations
Essential Information for the week of December 9-13, 2019

Transportation – response to concern forwarded by Director Leslie Harris

- Seattle Public Schools (SPS) Transportation Department has been working closely with First Student managers and the operations team to address the series of issues that have occurred with Route 622. First Student has eagerly listened to our issues and continues to make adjustments to improve route performance.
- We have been monitoring performance for the past three weeks, and while reliability has improved, driver absence has continued to lead to suboptimal performance that is way below the SPS standard of providing on-time and reliable service.
- We will continually focus on this until a permanent and sustainable performance is achieved on Route 622, along with a handful of other routes that are receiving similar attention. The ultimate goal is continued and sustained performance of each and every one of 353 buses.
Friday Memo to the Board
African American Male Achievement Initiative
Essential Information for the week of December 9-13, 2019

- Two Manager, Office of African American Male Achievement positions. Approx. 150 Applicants
- I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Campaign for Black Male Achievement Rumble Young Man Rumble December 3rd- 6th.
- I had the privilege to present at the Seattle Public Schools Community Partners Meeting on 12-13-19
- AAMA was awarded a grant from the Players Coalition to launch our Student Leadership Council. [Link](https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/doug-baldwin-presents-grants-local-elementary-schools/EYL35UQ7YBBKFJ2IFOVYWI4TPM)
  [Link](https://seattlemedium.com/seahawks-players-fund-provide-education-grants-seattle-public-schools/)
- We launched the AAM Student Leadership Council Applications- Closes 12/20/19 [Link](https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/aama/student_leadership_council)
Friday Memo to the Board
Family Engagement & Partnerships
For the Week of December 9-13

Inclusive and Authentic Engagement

- **Family Connectors University.** Our Fall 2019 cohort of Family Connectors University ends with an evening celebration at Neighborhood House in High Point, West Seattle. Families will graduate from the program prepared to be strong advocates for their students and other families in their schools. The celebration is on Thursday, December 19, 2019, from 5.30-7.30pm.

- **Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT)** Thurgood Marshall, South Shore, and Rising Star at African American Academy are participating in a family engagement strategy pilot which links to learning. The Stolte Foundation funds this pilot for three years. This strategy includes three parent-teacher meetings focused on a learning strategy in Math or Literacy. Parents learn the strategy and practice with their children at home. Data is collected to identify improvements and growth. Teachers share planning time, and a debrief session is carried out with teachers and principals. The APTT approach is a K-3 strategy we hope to scale up.

High-Quality Instruction and Learning Experiences

- **District Leaders Network Learning Lab** - In November 2019, the Engagement team attended The Institute for Educational Leadership’s annual Learning Lab with the School District of Philadelphia’s (PhilaSD) Office of Family & Community Engagement, led by Deputy Chief Jenna Monley.

- **The Learning Lab** was an opportunity for district leaders to learn from peers who’ve successfully applied family and community engagement strategies within their districts. Participants examined key structures and practices within a local context and connected with local partners, staff, families, and district leadership. They shared lessons learned and critical challenges met on the road to improving systemic family and community engagement.

- **Key Takeaway:** Read by 4th is a reading initiative in partnership with the mayor’s office, public and private businesses, communities, and the schools working to ensure that all students are proficient in reading by grade 4. Neighborhoods have reading captains (often a parent) who support neighborhood children and their families to read. They partner with laundromats to install reading nooks. These nooks are well used.

- **Recommendation:** Our early learning department could benefit significantly from some of the strategies involved in Philadelphia to advance our K3 ELA goal.
Anti-Racism Policy [Draft Version 2]

I. High level statement

In support of Policy 0030, the purpose of this Anti-Racism Policy is to: (1) establish the Board and District’s commitment to building an anti-racist school district; (2) declare directives for the Superintendent to execute as part of an anti-racist agenda in Seattle Public Schools; (3) acknowledge the historical and present-day need to become an anti-racist institution; and (4) establish common language in executing the eight commitments in Policy 0030.

The Seattle Public School Board (“Board”) and Seattle Public Schools (“District”) reject all forms of racism as destructive to the District’s mission, vision, values and goals. Acknowledging the historical and present-day challenges for students and staff who have worked to make these shifts towards developing an anti-racist school district, the Board and District declares commitment to the following:

II. Directives

The following are directives for the Superintendent to execute as part of an anti-racist agenda in Seattle Public Schools. All directives below are in alignment with and through the lens of Policy 0030.

1. Establish and sustain a district-wide culture that shares the collective responsibility to unapologetically identify, address and dismantle systems of racism that impact students and staff, decisions and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism and white supremacy and privilege.
2. Identify and acknowledge, with clarity and transparency, where racism, in all forms, occurs or exists within the District - naming the practice and the harm perpetuated and develop racial equity literacy to cultivate these skills in individuals and our institution;
3. Reject racist practices and beliefs, and actively cultivate and embrace the diverse gifts, talents and interests of every child in Seattle Public Schools;
4. Eliminate the predictive value of social or cultural factors, such as race, class, or gender, on students’ success;
5. Increase academic opportunity and equitable outcomes to those farthest from educational justice and foster cultural awareness in populations who benefit most academically and economically from racist structures;
6. Create measurable goals by which the District is accountable to itself, Board and community for achieving progress toward becoming an anti-racist organization; and
7. Create responses that reject racism, that are expedient, operationally consistent, and restorative - including accessible and safe reporting and complaint-handling processes for those experiencing or witnessing racism

- The Superintendent shall create the procedures necessary to implement this policy with appreciation of the diverse ways that individuals and groups with varied racial identities experience the world. It is not the aim of this policy to look at any group from a deficit lens, but instead to acknowledge that racism interferes with the recognition that every group has strengths that should be embraced and fostered throughout the District.

- Schools and the District shall be required to maintain records of complaints concerning racism by staff, students and parents and their resolutions in accordance with the Superintendent [Complaint Handling Procedures]. Procedures may differ depending on the nature of the complaint and persons implicated.

- The Superintendent shall report annually to the board on the progress of implementing anti-racism practices and strategies, the incidents of racism reported or identified, and the responses and actions taken. The Superintendent shall direct schools, programs, and district departments to report similarly on progress toward implementing anti-racism practices and strategies.

- Buildings shall provide information about racism in the Continuing School Improvement Plans including: data of incidents of reported racism and responses taken; and, its anti-racism education strategies aligned with Board policy and Superintendent procedure.

III. Background

The root cause of educational disparities is racism. Individual, institutional and structural racism has historically existed and continues to exist in the District. Combatting racism in every District setting is a legal and moral imperative. Practices of redlining and failure to share educational and economic resources and opportunity have resulted in a racially and economically segregated city. It is the Board’s belief that education is the first and best defense against the perpetuation of racist practices in our society. The Board recognizes that change is difficult and requires commitment and courage at every level of the organization. If we do not take on this critical work, we will not accomplish our commitment to eliminating race as a predictor of student success and ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities for every student, particularly students of color who are furthest from educational justice.
In the District, there are significant racial disparities that must be acknowledged and overcome, as they continue to disadvantage and create barriers for Students of Color. A few specific areas include, but are not limited to:

- Educational opportunity, academic performance, advanced learning identification and opportunities; graduation rates; standardized testing; special-education identification and delivery;
- Cultural and racial representation in school body, administration, teachers, local businesses contracted with SPS, curriculum, events, school norms, affirmations, decision making;
- Ethnic studies, self-exploration through curricula, safe and inclusive learning spaces; anti-racist and microaggression-free schools; safety without being targeted for extensive disciplinary action in school (NOTE: Adults of Color also are found to be more likely to be subjected to extensive disciplinary action, microaggressions, and racism despite their positionality as employees in the school or District);

The creation of the systemic barriers, like those listed above, have significant multi-generational effects and perpetuate racism in economic, social and educational systems. Hence, the dismantling or recreation of those systems so they are centered in racial equity can achieve the opposite—significant multi-generational effects that perpetuate equity in economic, social and educational systems. District leaders, staff, educators, students and families play a vital role in achieving this. We must recognize the manifestation of racism—in ourselves, our communities, our systems, and our social structures. Then we must work together and hold each other accountable to doing the work to create an equitable future for ourselves and the children of Seattle Public Schools.

IV. Definitions for the purpose of Seattle Public Schools

(Adapted from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity at www.racialequityalliance.org; Ablemarle SD Policy; Alberta Civil Liberties Research Center)

**Anti-racism**: the active process of identifying, examining, challenging and changing the values, environments, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism with the goal of creating educational and employment equity
Individual racism: pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race. Individual racism, also known as personal racism, includes both privately held beliefs, conscious and unconscious, and external behaviors and actions towards others.

Institutional racism: occurs within institutions and organizations, such as schools, that adopt and maintain policies, practices, and procedures that often unintentionally produce inequitable outcomes for people of color and advances for white people with privilege.

Structural racism: encompasses the history and current reality of institutional racism across all instructions and society. It refers to the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and polices that perpetuate a system of inequity that is detrimental to communities of color.

Reject: maintain environments, practices, and relationships that are not tolerant to any forms of racism; actively challenge yourself and others to analyze how racism manifests in yourself, your colleagues, and the systems that you impact/impact you; and do the work to dismantle and/or recreate those systems and mechanisms of racism (all kinds) so they are rebuilt with a center of racial equity.
Advanced Learning

Testing and Eligibility
- District has received and is processing approximately 10,000 eligibility measures including
  - Cognitive Abilities Test (CoGAT) screeners from K-2
  - Full CoGAT K-8
  - Iowa Academic Achievement Assessment
  - 1:1 and/or accommodated testing session for students served with 504 Accommodation Plans (“504”) or Individual Education Program (IEP) and/or who benefit from directions read in the home language.
- The final Saturday testing will occur on January 11, 2020
- Cross Departmental Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committees began the eligibility determination process on December 2, 2019.

Advanced Learning Task Force (ALTF) Update
- Task Force has been meeting in November and December developing procedural recommendations aligned to the Foundational Recommendations offered to the superintendent in September. Their final meeting was December 10, 2019 and a full report will be provided to the superintendent in mid-January, 2020.
- Past Advanced Learning information and updates are located on the district’s website at: https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/advanced_learning/department_information/news/advanced_learning_task_force_update

Next Steps
- Highly Capable Racial Equity Services Advisory (HC/RESA) public application process launched on the district website on 12/3/2019. The application process will remain open through January 8, and the first meeting of the HC/RESA will be February 4, 2020. Applications may be found here: https://www.seattleschools.org/families_communities/committees/advanced_learning/application

Special Education

In the fall, school leaders and teachers were notified that due to limited funds for District-Initiated instructional assistants this curriculum year, we have instituted assistance by providing job-embedded coaching and skill development for staff in schools. The Special Education and Coordinated School Health departments have built a Tier 2/3 Behavior Team that is comprised of social workers, Board Certified Behavioral Analysts (BCBA), Behavior Technicians, and PhD-level behavior specialists to better support the needs of our students and classrooms.
Friday Memo to the Board
Office of Public Affairs
Essential Information for the week of 12/07/19 – 12/13/19

Goal 1: Media Relations
- 12/11/19 Seattle Times “Here are some of the recommended changes for Seattle's advanced learning programs” [https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/h...](https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/her...)
- 12/10/19 Seattle Times “What should happen to SPS gifted program? Long-awaited recs coming tonight” [https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/a-...](https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/a-...)
- 12/10/19 Seattle Times “Seattle's wealth boom and disparity, as told through its public schools” [https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/seattles-...](https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/seattles-w...)

Goal 2&3: District Messaging – Outbound Communications, Customer Service
- Feature Story - Student Laptop Distribution at Rainier Beach High School, shared on social media: [https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/rainier_beach_laptops](https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/rainier_beach_laptops)
- Feature Story – Literacy Night at Dunlap Elementary, shared on social media: [https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/literacy_night_at_dunlap](https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/literacy_night_at_dunlap)
- Supported writing an Ethnic Studies and Cross-Credit Procedure update for website: [https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/ethnic_studies_and_cross-credit](https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/ethnic_studies_and_cross-credit)
- Provided media and communications support for the Hour of Code event at Franklin High School. A Feature Story will be published on the SPS website and social media by end of week.
- Seattle Excellence brochures complete and printed.
- Story about the school board election developed and posted: [https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/new_board_members_and_officers](https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/new_board_members_and_officers)
- Emergency communication support provided for Leschi Elementary and outbreak of norovirus (traditional media, family communication, web notice).
- Public Affairs led and completed a review of snow communications, programmatic schedule adjustments, and aligned with new transportation approaches. This work was completed across multiple departments including early learning, special education, operations, transportation, communication, and the Skills Center. All webpages updated and new translated family communications created including homepage web post and social media.
- SPSTV finalizing a translated kindergarten/new to SPS video for start of registration on January 6 and Open Enrollment beginning on February 3. In addition, new branded flyers created to support the admission and enrollment department.
- Human Resources transformation and FAQ developed and posted: [https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/transforming_hr](https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/transforming_hr)
- Developed and distributed a Ethnic Studies story on efforts to cross-credit high school courses: [https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/ethnic_studies_and_cross-credit](https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/ethnic_studies_and_cross-credit)
Friday Memo to the Board
Teaching and Learning Division

Essential Information for the week of December 9-13, 2019

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION

Instructional Materials Committee
As shared previously in a November Friday Memo, the recently revised School Board Policy No. 2015, Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials indicates that it is the policy of the Seattle School Board to create an Instructional Materials Committee (IMC), pursuant to RCW 28A.320.230. The policy indicates that the selection process for the IMC will be fair, consistent, and transparent. Further, the policy indicates that member selection, within the confines of the established structure provided in the policy and procedure, should endeavor to be inclusive and reflect the diversity of our students and families.

We are beginning the application and selection process for the Instructional Materials Committee this week. We anticipate that a broad notice will go out via email translated in the district’s five most common languages this Friday and additional emails will be sent to Principals’ Association of Seattle Schools (PASS), the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), and other community groups. After reviewing applications, we anticipate sharing the names of proposed candidates for the new IMC to the Curriculum & Instruction Policy Committee in January and to the School Board in early February.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer at dmdedbacker@seattleschools.org.