COVID-19 took over almost all of central administrations operations this week. We set up an incident command center, are holding 2 separate daily meetings, and are sending out multiple daily communications. I have been doing local and national media as well. This week I spoke to the national NPR, CNBC, KOMO, KING and KOMO radio. The good news is that our schools were able to be focused on teaching and learning.

The daily attendance for staff and students remained steady all week. Thank you to SEA and PASS for their support in this work. A huge shout out to 609 for their willingness to work overtime and do special cleanings at multiple buildings throughout the district. Everyone is focused on student and staff safety.

We have been in frequent conversations with King Co. Health and other health experts in this work. This week we spoke multiple times with the City, the UW, as well as local superintendents. Every one of these groups is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our students.

Thank you, Board Directors, for giving my team the space and grace to focus on this urgent operational work!

**Happenings:**

- Principals convened briefly to get an update on COVID-19 and were deployed back to schools to support their school communities.
- I presented to the Be Bold Now International Women’s conference. Such a powerful group of women leaders!
Responses to Questions from Director Harris
On February 26, 2020, Director Harris made the statement that “the previous Board gave HR one million dollars to put together a docketing system. The Board was never told that the docket system didn’t get implemented or the million dollars disappeared”. We have received media and community inquiries regarding these funds. Below is an overview of how funds were spent.

In Spring of 2016, HR began a series of efforts to move from an under-performing organization with siloed teams, low morale, poor quality and timeliness, disjointed business processes and antiquated technology to an organization capable of supporting District goals, most specifically, ensuring a high quality teacher in every classroom on the first day of school and every day of school.

Part of those efforts focused on those business processes and technologies which prevented HR from delivery services in a timely or quality manner. These efforts included the automation of our hiring and onboarding processes through our Applicant Tracking System – NeoGov, Human Capital analytics through an HR Data Warehouse, the implementation of an online case management and records management software, and a streamlined process throughout HR.

The School Board allocated 1.5 million dollars to HR in the 18-19 school year to implement these system improvements. To date, $477,985 of that was spent on the projects outlined below. The remaining balance of 1,022,015 were returned to the Budget Office and put into the general fund. The $477,985 was spent on the following:
- Project Management staff
- Contractual services for project scoping, automation of processes, data analysis
- Contractor working on API interface and SEBB implementation

Case Management Project:
The biggest project we undertook was to implement an online case management and records management software. While parts of this project were completed – as we now have all of our ADA Employee Accommodation cases in “Open Text”, the second phase of the project was abandoned.

The ultimate goal of the project was to automate and digitize paper processes into an online and robust case management system, and that the resulting records could be stored electronically with, ultimately, the rest of the District’s personnel files. Considerable time was spent working with DoTS and the software vendor, OpenText, to implement a technology solution. HR’s goal was our immediate need in the Labor Relations team. DoTS’ goal to design a foundation that could not only address HR’s immediate needs but would also serve as an enterprise platform District-wide. The software solution identified by DoTS for this effort seemed ideal and had been selected by the State as part of Washington State’s master contract. Unfortunately, after two years of effort, the initiative was not successful. The vendor’s internal ecosystem was inordinately complex and disjointed, their product teams siloed and unable to collaborate with each other within their company, and the product functionality across case management and records management was error-prone and not integrated. The project was too complex for the project structure that was put in place by DoTS, and this combined with the failure on the part of our vendor led HR to change the strategy.
HR was unable to implement the Open Text software solution for Labor Relations cases and instead put our “docketing” system in SharePoint. We track cases and timelines. We track by type of case, manager leading the case, date of allegation, and the date the case is closed. Additionally, through the efforts of this project we fully mapped our end to end business process, not just current state but desired, future state.

**Online Onboarding:**
Part of the “one million dollars” was also in support of implementing an online onboarding system. This project was completed. NeoGov is a cloud solution that HR was able to configure with support from DoTS. DoTS provided essential help creating an automated feed to send job information from SAP to NeoGov. The overall project management, vendor relationship, product research, configuration, testing, training and user adoption was done within HR. In addition, we redesigned the process of entering new hire data into SAP. Automated feeds across SAP and NeoGov replaced months of manual data entry (For School Year 19-20 and beyond)

**HR Data Warehouse:**
Lastly, were able to build HR Atlas (our new HR data warehouse). Previously we had no way to bring teacher demographics, performance and retention together. Now that we have built HR Atlas, we have a rich set of personnel data from which we can gather key metrics, identify hiring and retention trends and to support District decision making.
Safety and Security: Director Lisa Rivera-Smith requested information on Seattle Public Schools’ current protocol in an emergency. In particular, how does staff signal an emergency to building administration, safety officers and the district office?

- Staff is provided a physical Quick Reference Guide (also available online through MySPS) that details steps to take in an emergency. These steps also are practiced in monthly drills, which include shelter in place, lockdown, earthquake, evacuation and reverse evacuation.

- To communicate in an emergency, staff has access to landlines, cellphones, radio systems and Rapid Responder. Rapid Responder is a secure online emergency response interface that aids critical incident planning. Currently, the State legislature is reviewing support of Rapid Responder, which may result in expansion, contraction or elimination of future use. Safety and Security is holding off on considering partnering or replacement systems until this state review is completed, which is expected to be in 2020.
Friday Memo to the Board

EPE - Equity, Partnerships & Engagement
For the Week of March 2-7, 2020

EPE and AAMA (African American Male Achievement) Attend Symposium

- The EPE Leadership Team of Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Kirk Mead, Manal Al-ansi and James Bush, along with AAMA Executive Director Dr. Mia Williams, Assistant Principal Tia Yarbrough (South Shore PK-8) and Principal Ted Howard (Garfield High School), attended the Equal Opportunity Schools Symposium 2020.
- There was so much excitement about the Department of AAMA, new Strategic Plan and interest in Academic Acceleration for students furthest away from educational justice.
- We learned about Belonging and policy and adult decisions and practice that create systemic barriers that lock Black and Latinx students out of critical opportunities at three important access points:
  - Gifted & Talented Education Programs at Elementary School
  - 8th Grade Algebra 1
  - Advanced Placement (AP)

Anthony Shoecraft (Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning), Kirk Mead, Manal Al-Ansi, Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Dr. Mia Williams, James Bush, Ted Howard, Tia Yarbrough at the Equal Opportunity Schools Symposium, Atlanta, GA,
Chief Concie Pedroza
The meeting for Thurgood Marshall HCC 5th grade families referenced in the letter sent to families on 3/5/20 will be held on March 30th. Due to the current health monitoring within our district, we will notify families by March 20th if we need to cancel and/or postpone.

With response to this week’s questions from board directors regarding Universal Testing, also known as the Naglieri Nonverbal Assessment Test (NNAT), my team has compiled the following information.

Director DeWolf asked if Universal Testing information had been shared with the board. Yes, links were provided in the February 7 and 14 Friday Memos to the Advanced Learning Task Force (ALTF) Recommendations Report, NNAT and Universal Testing information was located under “Testing and Screening Recommendations” located on pages 28 and 29, Article numbers 11 and 12. The Advanced Learning Department is committed to expanding and/or prioritizing areas of the recommendations that do not fiscally impact the department or require a policy amendment. https://www.seattleschools.org/families_communities/committees/advanced_learning/altf_2018-19

Director Rivera-Smith asked several questions:
Will families be notified when it is happening?
Families have been notified that the screening will be taking place and that 2nd grade teachers will be communicating directly to families what date their classroom testing will be taking place. School leaders received notice in January/February, and again this week, about the process. Targeted Universal Screening has taken place in SPS since 2014-15.

Are we ensuring all children taking the screening know how to use a computer?
This is a 30-minute paper-pencil screener.

Are we ensuring all children are familiar with the kinds of questions that will appear on the test?
This screener comes with practice sets that students take just prior to the actual test. This test is based on puzzles and patterns, not words or math problems.

Are we ensuring all children complete the screener; i.e., teachers do not tell kids they can either go to recess or finish the screener?
Because the screener is so short, teachers have been encouraged to have all students involved. The decision around students with IEPs has been relegated to the Special Education teacher, who will assure that accommodations are followed and to make any decisions about students for whom this type of assessment is not reasonable.

Are we ensuring that kids who are removed/absent from class during the screener take it at another time?
Although we have a two-week window, we have encouraged teachers to give every child the opportunity to complete the screener. If there are any issues with making that happen, the advanced learning staff is available to support the process.

Are we sending information to families to let them know that they can still refer their kids for testing in the fall even if their kids do not "pass" the screener or "qualify" for testing because their standardized test scores don't meet the threshold?
Yes. This message was clearly part of the messaging to families.

Are we taking the steps to sign up all kids who "qualify" via the screener for the HC test?
Each year, including the first year of 2014-15, the data is triangulated with MAP results and families of students whose score profile is within the range of eligibility are sent a letter encouraging them to refer their child for Advanced Learning testing during our window of May 15th – September 21st.

Athletics
Please congratulate the following schools who placed in the Top 5 of this year’s Metro League tournaments:
- Girls’ Basketball - Garfield (Placed 2nd), Franklin (Placed 4th) and Rainier Beach (Placed 5th)
- Boys’ Basketball - Garfield (Placed 1st), Rainier Beach (Placed 4th) and Ingraham (Placed 5th)
- Girls’ Gymnastics Team - Ballard (Placed 1st), Ingraham (Placed 4th) and Roosevelt (Placed 5th)
- Boys’ Swim/Dive Team - Roosevelt (Placed 4th)
- Girls’ Wrestling Team - Chief Sealth (Placed 1st)
- Boys’ Wrestling Team - Ingraham/Rainier Beach (Tied 1st), Ballard (Placed 4th) and Chief Sealth (Placed 5th)
On Friday February 28th, the office of African American Male Achievement was intensely engaged in the community. In response to last week’s interview with KOMO, Paris Jackson wanted to engage our kings in living color. The Kingmakers of Seattle at Interagency, garnered the attention of Paris Jackson while learning about hidden messages and controlling images that intentionally lead African American males down the wrong path. The lecture underscored “not allowing tell-lie-vision to tell my vision” through explorations of multimedia. Instead, facilitator Emory Walters implored the young kings to identify with their most authentic educated vibrant selves. One of the kings quickly identified the founders of the Black Panther Party; and spoke about Black Wall Street and the social economics. While another king informed, “Men serve, and boys wait to be served…”

In celebration of Black History month, The Department of African American Male Achievement was invited to attend a Black History event and community celebration. This event celebrated the youth of the Van Asselt community. Including dance and drill teams, spoken word, and affirmations of our African American diaspora. Throughout the event the department engaged in service as evidenced in the photo below.
Summary of Out-of-District Credit Earning and Credit Recovery Policy and Procedure

In response to recent questions regarding Seattle Public Schools (SPS) student access to online/out-of-district courses. The questions are being raised, in part, because of a small proposed change to Policy No. 2420 in the Board Action Report (BAR) titled “Revisions to School Board Policy No. 2415, High School Graduation Requirements, and School Board Policy No. 2420, High School Grade and Credit Marking Policy, in Response to House Bill 1599 (HB 1599), Multiple Pathways to Graduation.”

The main policy that provides guidance on this topic is Board Policy No. 2024 on Out-of-District Credits and Credit Recovery. It seeks to ensure that all students have access to robust course offerings in their high schools, while at the same time offering students a range of options to earn credits outside of the district as needed. Per Policy No. 2024, out-of-district credits include courses that are offered online without SPS supervision, and in-person courses at high schools and colleges outside of SPS. (Note: approved dual credit programs like College in the High School and Running Start are not out-of-district courses.) At times, SPS also offers in-district online coursework, which is created by an Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)-approved online provider and supervised by an SPS accredited teacher. For example, high school credit recovery programs can include an online component, and certain high schools, like Middle College and Interagency, provide opportunities for their students to take in-district online coursework.

The Board approved major revisions to Policy No. 2024 in May 2019. Shortly thereafter, the Superintendent approved a new procedure for out-of-district credits and credit recovery. The new policy and procedure represent an effort to make access to out-of-district course taking, including out-of-district online course taking, more consistent and equitable, given requests from both principals and our families. Below is a more complete summary of what those changes were, why we made them, and how we continue to support schools and families in getting access to course-taking options within this updated policy. The small change to Policy No. 2420 that we are asking the Board to consider is connected to this overall effort to make all out-of-district credit-earning opportunities more equitable. It allows students to re-take courses in-district to earn a higher grade, but not to re-take courses out-of-district for a higher grade, since not all students can afford to take out-of-district courses.

What were the motivations for the new policy and procedure on out-of-district credits?

- Bring more consistency to the practice of taking courses out-of-district for high school credit. Before the new policy and procedure were created, district guidance was very vague. As a result, decisions about whether to allow students to take courses out-of-district were inconsistent and varied greatly between schools. Now, there are clear rules about when principals should allow students to take out-of-district courses for high school credit, and students have the same opportunities no matter which school they attend.
- Bring more equity to the practice of taking courses out-of-district for high school credit. Out-of-district courses must be paid for by students/families, and that creates inequitable outcomes. Some students can afford to pay for multiple classes outside of SPS, while others cannot. The new policy and procedure allow for students to take out-of-district courses for credit only, not for letter grades. This means that students cannot use out-of-district courses to raise their Grade Point Average (GPAs).

When are students allowed to take out-of-district courses?

- A student may take an out-of-district course if the student needs the course to graduate but cannot take the course at his/her/their school. For example, if the course is not offered, or if it full.
- A student may take an out-of-district course in order to get on track to access college preparatory coursework in 11th or 12th grade. For example, a student may take geometry out-of-district during the summer after 9th grade, and then take algebra 2 as a sophomore, pre-calculus as a junior, and Advanced Placement (AP) calculus as a senior.
- The policy and procedure purposefully do not allow students to take out-of-district courses for grade replacement (for example, if a student earns a D in a class at an SPS high school, and then wants to re-take the class out-of-district in order to replace that D with a higher grade). However, students may re-take courses in-district, and replace a lower grade with a higher grade.

Where can students take out-of-district courses?

- With approval from their principals, students can take out-of-district courses with OSPI approved online providers, as well as at other schools in Washington State, including private schools, high schools in other districts, and colleges.

Does this limit student access to advanced coursework?

- Students have access to many AP and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses at their high schools and can also take college level coursework in-district through College in the High School and Running Start. The new policy and procedure on out-of-district credits do not limit access to advanced coursework.

What is new about the district’s policy and procedure for credit recovery?

- The policy and procedure for credit recovery are largely unchanged, but they are clearer and easier to understand. Students may access credit recovery for no fee through the district, using online OSPI approved credit recovery programs, through summer school, 0 periods, etc. If the district cannot provide credit recovery, students may apply to take credit recovery out-of-district.

What is next?

- We are working to develop SPS created, in-district options for online classes, either for first time credit or credit recovery. This is a time-consuming process, as the courses must meet high academic standards, and be culturally relevant and responsive.

Middle School and High School Yearbooks Contract with Herff Jones

A question was asked at the February 26th Regular Board meeting as to how staff is providing guidance to the high school principals and/or yearbook advisors on keeping costs down and addressing equity issues. In response, we are encouraging schools to do the following to promote equitable access to yearbooks:

The McKinney-Vento (MKV) team has a point person in each school, who identifies student needs and facilitates resource requests. The MKV team conducts site-based training and provides program information on the District [website](#).

Schools also support students by soliciting donations through their Parent, Teacher, Student Association/Parent Teacher Association (PTSA/PTA), parents, and staff. [InvestEd](#) funding is also used in support of middle and K-8s schools. In addition, we will send out guidance to middle and high school leadership and yearbook advisors, outlining district supports including McKinney-Vento resource information and best practices related to providing equitable access.