

## Weighted Staffing Standards (WSS)/ School Funding Workgroup -- Meeting Notes

### 2021-22 School Year

Meeting Date: October 8, 2020, 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Meeting via “Teams”

#### Attendees:

JoLynn Berge, Eric Anderson, Sara Bonneville, Linda Sebring, Michael Stone, Leah Thorpe, Erica Ayer, Jeff Clark, Clover Codd, Shannon Conner, Diane DeBacker, Lief Esbenshade, Dedy Fauntleroy, Rina Geoghagan, Shelly Hurley, Stanley Jaskot, Debbie Nelsen, Sheila Redick, Farah Thaxton, Jennifer Matter, (+ one attendee by phone).

#### Agenda:

1. Option School Funding
2. Small schools
3. Review of School Tiering
4. Review middle school cut-off for Title I
5. Report on support for FRL program/enrollment
6. Impact for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) in Latinx population

Meeting started 3:00.

- (1) **Option School Funding:** Reviewed conversations from the past on Option School Funding. Spreadsheet shows list of option schools and enrollment for past 4-5 years. Options Schools are not funded differently but have more enrollment stability than neighborhood schools. Belief is they draw low equity students out of neighborhood schools; families may have more time and resources to navigate the registration process, course offerings, etc. Higher needs students tend to stay in neighborhood schools creating higher concentrations of student needs.
- a. Discussions: This is what they expected to see. “White flight”.
  - b. What more does this committee want to look at on this topic?
  - c. Mention of program review of option schools done in 2018.
  - d. How much does it cost to run (\$ per pupil)? ... see next topic (Small Schools)
  - e. What is future capacity of these [smaller] schools (Queen Ann, Cedar Park)
    - i. Any addition to enroll at these schools reduces enrollment at other schools
    - ii. Cedar Park opened with limited grade span, and has been growing into full grade span through grade 5
  - f. In 1999, small option schools merged into a single K-8, so there are examples of closing or combining small option schools.
  - g. Will have a discussion of the budget process
  - h. When Meany was closed, district closed it despite community support for the school. It appears smaller Option schools are protected.

#### Additional Discussion:

Budget Process: Board has requested a participatory budgeting process, involving the community. Finding areas of interest where the community can better understand and make recommendations on budget items. Largest “line item” is schools funding. Context for building the budget for 2021-22.

Regarding Licton Springs: understood that it was created to serve a certain population. Need to look at who you are serving at Option schools.

Is it too late for this conversation for next year? This is a multiple year conversation;; engage school board in a timeline and process. To do it thoughtfully really need to take a couple years. Loudest voices seem to be the ones listened-to. Going slowly and thoughtfully is important. What other ways to approach this? Outline a process of what it would look like for each school. Is the school thriving? Is support strong? Maybe putting forward to the board ideas to develop a process for evaluating.

Licton Springs was a school for two programs combined. A lot of Option Schools relate to historical promises.

Thinking about process, ways to quantify. Use capacity of building, required percentage of capacity. Can enrollment issues be solved with boundary changes. Look at populations that those schools were created to serve; are those students still attending those schools?

How many schools do we have and for what purposes? Capacity to building. Take into account how special education classrooms affect lower numbers of students

Racial Equity analysis as primary driver of this review. Some traditional schools are small because surrounded by option schools (“white flight”).

- (2) **Small Schools**: Data we wanted to look at (schools by size). 17 schools below 250. In 1997 it was discussed that schools under 250 had to come up with a strategy to grow/expand, or be closed/combined. For middle schools cut off was 600, for High Schools 1000.

Materials presented show Oct 2019 enrollments in schools (by grade band), in size groups: under 250 enroll, 250-300 (just elem), 300-350 (just elem), 350-500 (most elem, K8), 500-750 (remaining elem, K8), above 750 (MS & HS).

Noted that there does not seem to be a lot of difference between per pupil funding between schools. Differences in per pupil dollars do not seem to follow tiering levels; what does tier show? An indicator of the level of equity needs at schools? Smallest schools are generally in the lowest equity need tier (Tiers 3 and 4)

Discussion that the per pupil funding for Middle Schools is the lowest of all the grade levels. Discussion of differences between Elementary and Middle School populations and smaller size

school, smaller size classes. Differences between Middle Schools and High Schools in number of course offerings. Suggestions for a deeper conversation. What would you need to have that conversation? Don't know what the data would look like. Getting back to bigger conversation. Comprehensive Middle Schools getting good (achievement) results; can we see if K8 schools are making progress as intended?

K-3 ratio affects school funding for Elementary and K-8 schools. If schools are not funded for lower K-3 class sizes, then the district does not receive the funding. Those lower class-size resources cannot be shifted to other grade levels.

Option schools may have requirements for contractual class sizes. This affects number of students pulled from neighborhood schools.

This committee is where we can bring technical issues, review data, make recommendations.

What are we doing to change this data to reflect a racial equity goal? What would that look like? The per pupil reflected in the data is base funding formula. Are we suggesting changing the base funding formula to have more differentiation for poverty, for equity tiering, etc.?

- (3) **Review of School Tiering (presentation)**: Board Policy 0030 guiding principal for overarching framework of Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity. Equity Tiers used in school budgeting, Capital Levy, and other funding (DEEL) and central supports.

Method: uses 6 groups of students: underserved students of color, Low Income students of color, low income students, English Language Learner, Immigrant students, Homeless students. Look at each of those groups through 3 measures: count of students (Oct 1), Percent of students, and percent meeting standard on state test(s). Total of 18 measures for each school. Schools are ranked on a score of 1-10. Tiers 1-3 are above the average for all schools. This method identifies the small groups of schools at the top, furthest (1.0 standard deviation or more) from district average score.

Definition of Historically Underserved Students of Color: Using federal 7 groups for Historical Achievement by Race/Ethnicity, plus certain Asian and/or multiracial populations that are historically lower achieving. Differences between WSS definition of Underserved Students of Color and Strategic Plan definition of Students of Color Furthest from Educational Justice.

Today was about review of definitions and methodology. Questions for future discussion? How to address missing test score data from 19-20. Should we align more closely to Strategic Plan definitions of Equity? Should the Tiering method consider adding other factors?

Questions/Discussions: Is there anything more on Equity the group would like to go over? What would we like to discuss in two weeks?

Holistic approach, account for effects of race, equity, etc. Kids farthest from Educational Justice. Lack of additional funding (loss of City Levy funding). Body of work that is difficult to do with existing staff and resources. Example: attendance, essential to educational justice. The tiering system accounts holistically for race, poverty, etc., but some schools have less resources for

students farthest from social justice. DEEL is using our equity tiers to evaluate schools to receive grant funds from the City of Seattle's levy dollars.

There are always going to be winners and losers in school funding. There can't be winners and bigger winners. There are ways to look at FRL parts of our budget and move to other basis. There are different ways to look at this. There are pieces of our formula that can be moved in small step or bigger steps to other basis.

Why is there not family support, social workers, or restorative justice experts part of basic education in Seattle Public Schools? Matter of choice, not willing to give something up to add other positions, other support. What kind of stance are we going to take around equity, how big a step do we want to take?

Comments: Schools that get the bare-bones funding (no additional Title I, etc.), where Equity Dollars are the only flexible funds. Would it be better or worse to use some other method than poverty in schools' allocations? Think we can come up with other ways to think about that. What is the floor that we are comfortable with, all students get academic assurances. Take terminology "winners and losers" out of conversations. Advocate for there being too few dollars in the WSS formula; increase the base in Middle School funding, not take from other schools. Suggest that principals reach out to get broad input on questions and bring back to next WSS meeting. Proportional dollars may not be exact. Different levels within formula. Staffing allocation based on size and per pupil allocations. Where do we get funding from? Maybe some other way to look at small schools and option schools?

Equity Dollars, based on Free and Reduced Lunch counts, was a way to shift more money to schools with higher needs. Did not have Tiering when the original Equity Dollars formula was added to the WSS.

Can we have discussions about enrollment; how far is the district down. Discussions ongoing with state OSPI.

(4) **Review middle school cut-off for Title I:** Review of materials provided.

In the past, there was a split between Title I schools, and LAP schools, either or funding. Rules around who may be served and who must be served. Around 2013, all schools must be served by LAP; funding spread across all schools, and Title I thresholds were lowered by the District. Developed a K-5 model and a 6-8 model. Returned to poverty as the measure, and Middle School(MS) threshold reduced from 75% to 60%. Only High School(HS) served above 75% (must be served).

Reasons for lowering further for MS, specific to Mercer, large aggregate number of students (691), despite being below 60% poverty. Suggest moving the MS threshold to 50%

Have to pick a date to pull data for measurements. District date (end of 1<sup>st</sup> semester) is not same as Atlas data. If considering spreading Title I funding further by lowering the MS threshold (50%), is there any comment from HS principals?

- (5) **Report on support for FRL program/enrollment:** Shared letter that went out to community eligibility schools. Benefits of registering for FRL. Getting translations done so they can go out to schools. Is link friendly to smart phones? Will check on that.
- (6) **Impact for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) in Latinx population:** Research and Evaluation has extended analysis from prior years to see if we are seeing attrition out of the program. Student participation from 2013-14 to 2019-20. Decline around 11% over those 7 years. There has been a spike in Hispanic students exiting, which seems to have been a one-year anomaly. Number of exiting students has returned to former levels. New finding: Non-US Born Hispanic students FRL participation fell sharply between the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years.

Per page 3 of handout, participation [in FRL program] has positive impact on student outcomes, social stigma and availability of other food options impact participation, partnerships between Immigration and police departments, and changes in federal policy toward immigration may have had impact on willingness to participate. Participation in very racial/ethnic group has declined .

Wondering if there is any way to know if the kids that dropped out two years ago ... did we ever capture them back or have they disappeared from the system. Can we find out?

- (7) Topics for next month. Please let JoLynn or Linda know about any topics you want added to list from today.
- Deadline reach out to constituent principals for discussion topics ... by next Thursday
  - Update to 2020-21 enrollment
  - Update on Hispanic students that left FRL program; numbers that returned, numbers still enrolled
  - list of long-term subjects

Meeting adjourned 5:05