

Board Special Meeting

2445 – 3rd Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134



Work Session: Closing Opportunity Gaps
Executive Session: Evaluate the performance of a public employee
Wednesday, September 30, 2015, 4:30 PM – 7:00 PM
Auditorium, John Stanford Center

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 PM. Directors Blanford, Carr, McLaren, Patu, Peaslee and Peters were present. Director Martin-Morris did not attend as he was out of town. Superintendent Larry Nyland and Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Michael F. Tolley staffed the meeting.

Director Blanford explained this is the third part of the Board SMART Goal #5. Michael Tolley introduced Shauna Heath and Bernardo Ruiz and noted this is an opportunity to discuss the initiatives that are going on currently and looking forward to what is planned related to this topic.

Work Session: Closing Opportunity Gaps

Setting Context

Michael Tolley spoke about the Smarter Balanced Assessments results. This data was shared during the Board Retreat on September 26th. Students in our school district overall are outperforming the State in Math and Language Arts. However, we have significant achievement gaps that still exist. There is a five-year plan for closing the opportunity gap.

Results of Action Plan Work

Mr. Tolley explained that the district needs to focus on transforming what we do as adults in teaching and leadership practices. The focus is on Goal 3 (Mastery of the Core Academic Subjects) and Goal 4 (Elimination of Disproportionalities) of the draft five year Action Plan for accelerating academic achievement for African American males and other students of color.

Goals & Measures of Achievement

Shauna Heath explained that standards-based grading is documenting students' mastery of the standards. There are many ways to grade based on standards. It will help close the achievement gap as we move into that direction. Teachers are looking at master rather than a percentage and reporting on skills leading up to the mastery of standards.

Targeted Strategies

Bernardo Ruiz discussed Goal 4 (Elimination of Disproportionalities) of the Action Plan and how it has guided the current work. Principals spent five days discussing how to close the opportunity gap.

Dr. Nyland explained that the strategies are research based and intended to help guide the district's work. There needs to be some measure of support. The number of schools that are working with the RULER socio-emotional curriculum has doubled. Schools can pick their own strategies, but these are the strategies that the district is supporting.

Mr. Tolley explained for one of the key strategies, all principals were asked to set a goal for addressing students that appear in the opportunity gaps and focus on the African American males. Principals are expected to identify a group of students who are performing below standards. There is a cycle of inquiry principals are expected to follow. Principals were asked to identify achievement gaps in behavior as well as academics.

Ms. Heath mentioned the need to build a system that builds self-efficacy. The focus this year is on formative practices. Staff is working to develop a framework and systems that will be put in place with 30 schools over the course of the school year. The goal this year is to develop systems goals around professional development. The hope and intent is to develop efficacy in teachers which will help develop the efficacy in students. Ms. Heath spoke about other strategies imbedded in the work for this year.

Superintendent SMART Goal Language

Michael spoke about the focus on two goal areas from the Action Plan. Within the three pillars, three signature strategies have been identified for initial focus:

- Beliefs, Attitudes and Behaviors (high expectation mind set)
- Positive Relationships and Effective Discipline
- Practitioners' Academies (Transforming Teaching Practices)

The district is moving forward with strategies which are directly tied to the Superintendent's goals. As we look at each and every student, we know that we are going to have to do things differently. There is a need to change the practices, systems, structures, culture around the schools and the district. The district will continue to provide and increase supports for struggling students, however, there is a need to identify strategies and practices that need to change districtwide.

The School Board Directors were asked for their opinions on the three Superintendent SMART goal language options that best describes the work.

- SMART Goal Option 1 = Closing opportunity gaps for African American males and other students of color
- SMART Goal Option 2 = Closing opportunity gaps for African Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders and other students of color
- SMART Goal Option 3 = Closing opportunity gaps for all historically underserved students

It was a split decision. Three School Board Director indicated their support for option 1 and three School Board Directors indicated their support for option 2. Director Blanford would like Director Martin-Morris to have the opportunity to weigh in.

Executive Session: Evaluate the performance of a public employee

Director Carr announced at 6:09 PM that the Board was going into executive session to evaluate the performance of a public employee, and the meeting was scheduled for approximately 60 minutes, with an anticipated end time of 7:15 PM.

The special meeting recessed into executive session.

Director Carr called the executive session to order at 6:15 PM. Directors Blanford, Carr, McLaren, Patu, Peaslee and Peters were present. Staff present was Superintendent Larry Nyland and Acting General Counsel John Cerqui.

At 7:07 PM, Director Carr recessed the Board out of the executive session.

The Special Meeting reconvened at 7:08 PM and there being no further business to come before the Board, Director Carr adjourned the Special Meeting at 7:08PM.