

Date: Thursday, October 30, 2014
To: Larry Nyland, Superintendent
From: Michael F. Tolley, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
Re: Friday Memo for October 31, 2014

Division of Teaching and Learning: Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Elementary & K-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences:

This communication was sent to principals:

The District has been granted a waiver under WAC 180-18-050(3) from the provisions of the minimum 180-day school year requirement pursuant to RCW 28A.305.140, solely for the purpose of conducting parent/teacher conferences. We will again hold parent/teacher conferences on the three days prior to the Thanksgiving break (November 24, 25 and 26, 2014), which will be non-student days for elementary and K-8 schools for the purpose of holding parent/teacher conferences (all grade levels in K-8).

Schools MUST hold conferences on Monday, November 24th and Tuesday, November 25th, however, staff through their decision-making process will determine how student-parent conferences will be scheduled. An example might be that a building would schedule evening conferences the week before Thanksgiving week, schedule the remaining conferences for Monday and Tuesday, then would not work the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving. Or they may schedule Saturday, November 22nd for conferences, however, ALL staff must be at the school during those conference hours on Saturday, including Special Education teachers and Instructional Assistants since they are essential members of the teaching team. In total there should be the equivalent of three days of time (22.5 hours) committed to parent-teacher conferences. Since this is key work time, ALL staff must be present for conferences. **Regardless of the plan, every school office must be staffed on Wednesday, November 26th.**

District requests two-year waiver of new credit requirements:

Washington State recently adopted new rules increasing the number of course credits required for graduation from 20 to 24. These new requirements were due to take effect with the class of 2019, our current eighth graders, but the district will be requesting a two-year waiver.

The updated 24-credit requirement creates some challenges for Seattle Public Schools. Most high schools offer a six-period school day, meaning that over four years, students with typical schedules may earn a maximum of 24 credits. While many of our students do earn 24 credits, the new code leaves no room to fail even one course for students following that schedule. In addition, it limits students who wish to take more classes than those that are required.

The district views the new requirements as an opportunity to rethink our systems for providing credits, which may include revisions to course offerings or schedules. In fact, “improving systems to support academic outcomes to meet student needs” is a key component of our Strategic Plan.

Knowing that this work will take time, the district is in the process of applying for the two-year waiver. If the waiver request is approved by the Washington State Board of Education, the 24-credit requirement would take effect for students entering ninth grade in the 2017-18 school year, the class of 2021. If the waiver request is not granted and the requirement takes effect ninth-graders in the fall of 2015, student schedules will remain in place for next year, and the district will look at options for changes after that point.

The district is planning to submit the waiver request to the Board of Education in time for its January meeting, at which point we will communicate their decision to staff and families.

CTE program offers expert help for Hour of Code:

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) program is encouraging schools to participate in the Hour of Code this year. The Hour of Code is a national movement to encourage students of all ages to spend at least one hour learning to code during National Computer Science Week, which falls on December 8-14 this year. This is the second year for the program.

The CTE program is offering to provide coding experts to assist in schools during that week. The website, <http://hourofcode.com/>, provides more information and resources.

More Singapore Method professional development offered:

The math program is excited to be able to offer additional training from Staff Development for Educators on math teaching strategies within the Singapore Method. This is the math teaching method upon which the Math in Focus elementary texts are based. Some district teachers received this training in August and gave it high praise. Based on their input we are offering it again for more teachers this winter.

Building administrators have been asked to select one teacher to attend each daylong session:

- Saturday, November 15: **K-2 Number Sense**, at John Stanford International School lunchroom
- Saturday, December 13: **3-5 Number Sense**, at West Seattle Elementary School lunchroom
- Tuesday, December 16: **Bar Modeling**, location TBD

The Math Program is also offering a Math in Focus training targeting specifically to instructional assistants.

Elementary Progress Reports updated; videos and resources offered to teachers and families:

The Department of Curriculum & Instruction has made changes to the Elementary Progress Reports to reflect our College and Career Readiness Standards (Common Core).

To help teachers understand and adapt to the changes, we have created a 10-minute informational video, sample progress reports, overlays, FAQs and other resources – all posted to the internal mysps page: <http://epr.mysps.seattleschools.org/> This page is open and available to any staff member with a login. We have shared the resources through the Principal Communicator and through our teacher newsletter.

We have also created another video to explain the changes to families. The family video may be viewed at this link: <http://vimeo.com/110191805>. This family video is airing on the district TV channel and will be shared with families through other media in the coming weeks so that families understand the new progress reports before late-November conference time.

Curriculum & Instruction has asked principals to support this change by sharing the resources electronically, during staff meetings and during grade-level professional learning community time.

Common Core language updated:

Teaching & Learning and Curriculum & Instruction, in consultation with the Communications staff, is altering the way the district refers to Common Core State Standards. To downplay the often-confusing phrase “Common Core” and emphasize the purpose of the standards, we will use the phrase “College and Career Readiness Standards (Common Core).” We are encouraging district staff to avoid acronyms at all times, instead referring to them as “the standards” on second reference in our communications.

Additionally, we are encouraging district staff to avoid the acronym SBAC in reference to the state-mandated assessments that begin this spring. Instead, we advocate calling them “Smarter Balanced assessments.”

Annual Report for Policy 2110SP, Department of English Language Learners (ELL) and International Programs Procedures:

Transitional Bilingual Instructional Development and Title III ELL Professional Development

Demographic Information:

Current Enrollment – 6,002 students 12% of the district population

ELL Waived Services - Central = 123, NE Region = 100, NW Region = 79, SE = 69, SW = 123

Languages Spoken – 127

Professional Development:

We are in our second year of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) through Stanford University, Dr. Kenji Hakuta and Dr. Jeffrey Zwiers. The MOOC is titled Constructive Classroom Conversations: Mastering Language for the Common Core State Standards. We began the course offerings in March of 2014 with 100 participants. The MOOC course had a completion rate of 90%. This year we have 102 participants registered for the Fall Modified MOOC course. The modifications include five Professional learning community session by

region (3 hours each), and uploaded student conversation videos from Graham Hill and the World School. The videos from Stanford did not reflect our student population. And, modified reading assignments based on ELL Coach feedback.

Our next step in professional development will begin December 2nd. Dr. Hakuta and Dr. Zwiers will be visiting to work with our English Language Arts (ELA), Science and Special Education Program Managers, the ELL team and our City Levy Partners (Carmela Dellino and Kristi Skanderup). This conversation will focus on infusing our MOOC learning into core content professional development, with a focus in Readers Workshop and Next Generation Science Standards.

The central ELL team continues to provide additional Inquiry based professional development for Instructional Assistants (IA's) and ELL certificated teachers every two months.

ELL Compliance and General Information:

The ELL Department had three findings in Title III and three finding in Migrant. The findings are as follows and have been corrected.

ELL - Title III:

7.1 - Implemented Procedures to identify initial and continuing eligibility. – *Enrollment Services description revised and enrollment services staff responsibility identified.*

7.3 - The district has a process for identifying Native American students. *We always notify parents of identification but we needed to revise the parent letter of a 10 day testing window.*

7.8 - Allowable use of Funds – *one school used Title III funds to purchase core content materials and two staff members were not allowed under Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) based on job description.*

Migrant- Title IC:

3.7 - All school personnel have been provided professional development to enhance their ability to understand and appropriately respond to the needs of migrant students. *This has not been resolved as access to principals is challenging.*

3.9 - The Migrant Education Program district recruiter is allotted sufficient time and flexibility to conduct identification and recruitment activities throughout the district boundaries. *We have created a color coded schedule that designates the, 5 time work for Title III and .5 time worked for Migrant.*

3.10 The district's program records clerk is provided sufficient time to report the services migrant students received into the migrant database. *We have designated and color coded the time our data person works for migrant.*

Annual Report for Policy 3123, Withdrawal Prior to Graduation:

As per Policy 3123, Withdrawal Prior to Graduation, the Board directs the Superintendent to submit an annual early withdrawal report which outlines the age and grade level for each student, the reason(s) for leaving and any follow-up data that has been collected after the student has withdrawn.

The attached report indicates the age as well as grade and the reason for withdrawal. Also attached is the list of codes, reasons for withdrawal and a brief description.

Please note, at this time the district does not collect follow-up data after the student has withdrawn.

Attachments: Policy 3123
Withdrawal Policies and PowerSchool Exit Codes
Dropout Reasons by Age of Student/Dropout Reasons by Grade