

Friday Memo

December 2, 2016

This memo includes 10 attachments

Dear Board members,

Good News/Kudos:

Rival frisbee teams from Roosevelt and Cleveland High Schools are working together to raise funds to send one of them to a national tournament. Their players claim each is the other's biggest competitor. This season, Cleveland had a clear edge over Roosevelt. They finished second in the Washington State Tournament. In a few months, they'll head to Nationals. Both teams acknowledge this is just part of what it means to play Ultimate Frisbee. The sport relies on something called "Spirit of the Game." It refers to the sportsmanship, fairness and respect that players demonstrate as they self-officiate the game. Players from the two teams have become fast friends. Some have played on club teams together. Others met through this effort they've shared. Each team has raised about \$1600 this season. "It's special," Coach Dewey-Valentine said. "Guys who don't know each other, who have never played together, are high fiving each other." It's the ultimate show of sportsmanship. From <http://komonews.com/news/local/rival-teams-band-together-to-send-one-to-national-tournament>

Kudos to Roxhill Elementary Kindergarten Teacher, Michael Popelka, for being awarded a Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching. With the support of the US Department of State, he will be doing research from January until May 2017 in the Amsterdam area on a topic that directly affects his school and the Seattle School District at large. His project is based around the Dutch education system and how they provide equitable access to education, arts and enrichment opportunities for immigrant students. Roxhill has a very high population of immigrant students. He is hoping that through his research he will be able to learn best practices and potentially develop some strategic plans around equity and immigrant education upon his return in June. He understands that equity and eliminating opportunity gaps are of the highest importance to the Seattle School Board and Superintendent. He feels that this Fulbright Distinguished Teaching Award is an opportunity to directly act on this issue.

Kudos to Tyra Williams, McKinney-Vento Liaison. "Tyra Williams is hands down THE most relationally connected SPS representative I know. Tyra has helped create six church school partnerships. It is evident that she has her colleagues' deepest respect and friendship. She helped organize a recent event that brought together 50 principals, pastors and family support workers to explore potential partnerships. Fifteen new partnerships came out of this meeting – partnerships that will meet needs like: food and clothes for students, self-help facilities projects, tutoring and reading to students. None of this amazing work would have been accomplished without Tyra's organizational, relational and professional competence. Tyra is a gift to SPS and the thousands of families she serves." – Roy Chang, Pastor, Seattle Chinese Alliance Church. P.S. Roy is an incredible partner to Dearborn Park and an ambassador for the creation of added partnerships.

Kudos to Ingraham High School Teacher, Robert von Ravensberg. Mr. von Ravensberg is a teacher of the automotive program at Ingraham High School. His students are clearly getting not

only the technical skills they need to be successful but also the employability skills. His students were respectful, asked great questions and were well prepared to listen to information about further education and jobs. Mr. von Ravensberg is teaching jobs skills to his students. – From a Director at Shoreline Community College

Prospective New Principals. Keisha Scarlett, Director of Professional Growth & Educational Support, worked with our Human Resources (HR) department to provide a two-hour session for internal principal candidates. Cabinet members shared the focus of our district work (Strategic Plan and Eliminating Opportunity Gaps (EOG)) as well as the HR processes that result in the hire of new principals. The evening also included 1:1 sessions where the candidates could ask questions of cabinet and Human Resources staff.

Native American Support. Kudos to Boo Balkan Foster, a teacher at Chief Sealth. So glad to have you and seqacib to empower and encourage our Native students. You help get buy in from many Native students. Now I see more students pushing themselves and holding themselves to high expectations as learners – more students are leaders and role models for engagement (and some are there). You are helping transform the relationship between Native American students and their academic community. They respect themselves and are proud of who they are and where they want to go. – From a Chief Sealth International High School colleague

Hot Topics:

Budget Process. We are in the process of launching our budget work. Big messages are:

- \$100M of our local levy goes to salaries – an unfunded state responsibility under McCleary
- \$30M of our already approved local levy has been cut by the legislature
- This is our biggest budget impact in more than a decade
- The legislature drew a blueprint for funding and has not followed their own plan.
- Our Seattle Legislative Delegation has been extremely helpful. Without statewide legislative action, we must cut hundreds of positions. Other school districts will have similar problems, though not at the scale of our due to our size.

This information was shared widely with staff this week. Public budget sessions will be held in the coming weeks. Our goal is to determine budget reductions early in January in order to send staffing allocations to schools in February.

Parent, student, staff and stakeholder concern is strong. We will be regularly providing more detail. Budget cuts create tension and anxiety. We certainly wish it wasn't necessary. We have received several messages from concerned parents telling us to simply not make cuts. Our answer must be: school districts are required by law to pass a balanced budget. If we do not have a balanced budget, meaning yearly expenditures must be less than total yearly revenue, a school district moves into a fiscal position called "binding conditions". OSPI and the local Educational Service District (ESD) work independent of any district requiring us to adopt a balanced budget. Our budget plan must be based on fiscal reality and having the revenue to cover expenses. The local ESD becomes the fiscal overseer and has final decision authority (all things budget, pretty much everything!) of the district in binding conditions. Our Deputy Superintendent, Stephen Nielsen, was the chief fiscal officer for an ESD and has experience in being the overseer of a

school district in binding conditions. He emphatically does not recommend that path for Seattle Public Schools.

Some concerned parents have asked, why can't we keep spending as we need to and sue the state? School districts already sued, the state lost, and now the state legislature must step up to the problem.

What about the city helping us? A question came to us about city support as we seek legislative relief for state under funding K 12 education. The mayor's staff provided this statement:

“Mayor Murray believes that fully funding high-quality K-12 education is the paramount responsibility of the State and stands with the Seattle School District in seeking adequate financial support from the State to provide a high-quality education to all the children of Seattle. Accordingly, education funding is an important element of the City's legislative agenda for the upcoming session in Olympia, and this week the City's Office of Intergovernmental Relations leadership and state team met with several key School District staff to discuss how we can best work together in Olympia on our shared legislative goals, including fully funding education and supporting new state revenue options. In addition, with funding made available from the Families and Education Levy, the Seattle Preschool program, and our Creative Advantage partnership, the City has already partnered with District to expand the educational opportunities available to children throughout the City.

Looking forward, the Mayor is seeking to expand this partnership to implement recommendations emerging from the Education Summit held earlier this year. These recommendations are the results of input from over 2,000 Seattle residents in meetings, on-line and at the Mayor's Education Summit this April and months of work from a diverse group of education stakeholders. At the same time, the City and the District continue to coordinate about planning together for a better city for all – including work on siting new schools, improving transportation, especially walking - to the schools and other concerns. This all said, the City is not in a position financially to step into the shoes of the State and take on the responsibility of adequately funding Seattle schools. Increasing demands for police, fire, parks, human services and other critical services are creating financial challenges for the City itself.”

We deeply appreciate the support of our mayor and the citizens of our city during this fiscal challenge.

EOG Funding. With the intense focus on eliminating opportunity gaps, many have asked how much we are spending on EOG. The attached sheet shows that we are spending about \$2M on SMART goals and \$10M on other related efforts to eliminate gaps. We are also using – and attracting – considerable outside funds that help support this work.

Seattle Staffing. A related question has to do with how Seattle allocates staff. Our local levy pays for \$100M in salaries – more than half of our local levy. Recognizing that the levy pays for 30-40% of every employee's salary, we staff:

- Teachers and custodians pretty close to the state formula

- Librarians and counselors below the state formula
- Assistant principals, security and nurses above the state formula

Cradle through College is a lobbying effort by the Road Map districts along with Community Based Organization partners. Given Seattle's intense focus on McCleary and the \$74M shortfall for next year's budget, we have focused our lobbying efforts primarily on McCleary and the Levy Cliff.

Twenty Minutes. Based on the best information that we now have, our recommendations are:

- Add 10 minutes in the AM and 10 minutes in the PM; this reflects the survey data.
- Go with an early release; not a late start; all surveys agreed.
- Do early release on Wednesday (staff Professional Development (PD) preference); not Friday (parent preference).

Note: Friday has been problematic for staff and student attendance in other districts.

The Operations Committee has asked that we do a cost analysis on a two-tier transportation system. Transportation has done several scenarios that get the cost down from \$3.8M to \$2.8M. The transportation bids include the two-tier option – which will give us actual price. With \$3M representing another 30 job cuts; that makes this decision harder. Per the School Board's request, we have begun to explore alternative funding sources. Additionally, Pegi McEvoy, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, is working with the Transportation department to determine if there might be other alternatives for schools that might want to switch times if we stay with the three-tier system.

Goals

My Brother's Keeper (MBK). We have continued commitment to combat chronic absenteeism to drive student success. We are one of thirty districts selected to participate in the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) President Obama's National Success Mentors Initiative. Given the challenge of chronic absenteeism in our nation's schools, our goal is to match every chronically absent 9th and 6th grader with a Success Mentor. As with everything, school principals are the key to success with this effort. We are grateful to our district's principals below for their leadership in this effort:

- Mia Williams – Aki Kurose Middle School
- Shannon Conner - McClure Middle School
- Jeff Clark - Denny International Middle School
- Chris Carter - Mercer International Middle School
- Susan Follmer - Washington Middle School

Sarah Pritchett, Executive Director, is our district's Team Captain, who has been an extraordinary partner in helping to lead this work on the ground. For more information on this work, please see the attached document.

HR Update. The number of staff on administrative leave have been reduced from two dozen down to only four. Leadership training for problem solving (grievances, Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying (HIB) complaints and parent concerns) has begun; several two day sessions will be available over the next several months.

School Visits:

Daniel Bagley Elementary School Carla Holmes, Bagley Principal, tells me about the RULER work on social-emotional health. Each classroom charter has a unique character – owned by the students and teacher. The staff charter – posted in the front office – tells of their commitment to reach each and every student. One of their recent family nights focused on creating family charters. They had so many attend they had to have three venues. Instead of serving food, they simply put food and water out on the tables and invited families to join in. And for the first time, they had sessions in three additional languages. Even their newly formed student council is engaged in making the school more welcoming; Their first project is fund raising for a friendship bench.

Professional learning Communities (PLCs) are working on writing. Their PD is focusing on standards and they are aligning their work around those standards. By year end they hope to have interim assessments and end of year rubrics that they all agree on. Reading is scheduled for 60 minutes per day and interventions for now are coming out of core instruction time – an area for growth in the future.

Since Bagley serves two audiences – Montessori and Neighborhood – the neighborhood classes grow with mid-year enrollments while Montessori is protected from split classrooms and mid-year enrollment changes. Some neighborhood parents who may be good candidates for Montessori need help completing the paperwork and understanding the process.

Their church partner, Bethany Lutheran, houses the Boys and Girls Club which has to collect fees in order to operate. With school now dismissing earlier, Bethany Lutheran is talking about expanding the after school program and working with Bagley to provide scholarships for students that need assistance. The school would then offer some academy, guided reading and computer classes as part of that mix.

As we visited classrooms we saw great mathematics instruction. Students were working on “multiple representations” the ability to convert from written to oral, from math to money, to equivalent fractions. They were using different strategies to add: counting on; adding to make multiples of fives; adding to make multiples of ten; using the number line. When I am not disruptive, I ask students what they are learning. The young lady who explained that they were working the “commutative property” patiently explained that you could add in any order: $1 + 6$ was the same as $6 + 1$!

And as I walked down the hall to leave I noted that there were study tables outside of every classroom – most of them occupied by a community volunteer working with one or two students. Not one inch of wasted space!

McDonald International Elementary School is located in the Wallingford area, not far from Jack’s market (now long gone) where I would order a one pound wedge to be cut from the giant cheddar wheel in the deli. Principal Michelle Sushner tells me about the great staff and parents they have. As an international school they are working to develop standards that apply to the

international work they do. For example, there are many resources for teaching reading in English. You can use an “anchor text” that has already been analyzed for things like “main idea.” If, however, you are teaching main idea from a Japanese book, you have to do that work yourself. McDonald and John Stanford serve similar students with a similar curriculum – so they are now doing their PD and some of this development work together on their early release days.

Two of their lead teachers are leading the “relationships” work that was central to the TRI day training on September 1st. Their goal is to work on respect – digging deep – tying that to their RULER work. They are talking about respect as a core value and deciding in class meetings what respect looks like. Classes are doing “class compliments” with students drawing names from a jar and talking about the good things that fellow student does. And as a way to learn every student’s name, Michelle does “Lunch with the Principal” with a small group of students each and every day. She asks questions like, What do you wish your teacher knew about you? Answers? That I have a dog; Where I went on vacation.

Due to enrollment growth, classrooms have been added where they could find space – so third grade classes, for example, were not located together. That will have to wait for another year. For now, grade level teams are scattered throughout the building.

As we visit classrooms, we see:

A Book Club where students give book talks recommending books to each other.

Each classroom with two adults – one a building funded Instructional Assistant (IA) or intern – in support of that classroom’s international language: Spanish or Japanese.

That is a great asset and requires them to raise \$1,000 per student in contributions.

Math in the Japanese class where they are learning to read story problems; teachers have to translate the worksheets and texts from our English texts into Japanese.

The difference between “la” feminine and “el” masculine forms of the English word “the” in Spanish.

As I leave I notice the international flags posted at the entry to make international students feel welcome.

John Stanford International Elementary School. Sarah Jones, Principal, is also meeting with students over lunch as one way to learn names, find out what students’ interests are and build relationships. I join Sarah and the students for a school lunch as she asks what they like about John Stanford, what they do on the weekend, and what sports they like. John Stanford is working to build relationships with their parents by sponsoring affinity groups – special events for Japanese language groups; Spanish language groups and African American families. In each case, they are asking parents what they want to know in regard to school.

As in the case of McDonald, John Stanford is finding it harder to raise the funds to provide a full time IA or intern in each class. In both schools they start by asking each parent to contribute \$1000 per student – in addition to the other classroom and school activities that they provide. For now, they are clarifying what the duties are to see more clearly the essential functions of the role. They also had questions about the K-3 funding and the rationale for potential changes from this year to next.

Stevens Elementary and Seattle World School: On November 15, 2016, Michael Tolley, Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning visited Steven’s Elementary with Principal Brian Fitch and World School with Principal Oksana Britsova. At both visits, Mr. Tolley and the school principals discussed the problem of practice within the schools’ Cycle of Inquiry regarding Eliminating Opportunity Gaps.

Community Engagement:

Garfield High School’s Report Card Conferences. As part of their commitment to facilitate student success in their 9th grade year, Garfield High School held their first Report Card Conferences on December 2, 2016. This was an opportunity for professional members of the community to connect with our students and speak to them about their academic goals. Each individual conference took about 5 minutes and gave an opportunity to check in with students to help them set goals related to course performance. Through asking questions, volunteers assisted students in self-reflecting, self-advocating, and setting goals.

Early Learning Family Engagement. On November 18, 2016 Seattle Public Schools facilitated an Early Learning Family Engagement event at the John Stanford Center in which school leaders from Seattle, Highline, Edmonds and Everett shared ideas and planned ways to improve family engagement. Facilitator Ron Mirr (from Scholastic, Inc. and the Harvard Family Engagement Institute) shared powerful strategies focused on meaningful family engagement programs and shared his work on the power of providing families training to support their understanding of student data and implementing instructional practices to improve student learning.

Eliminating Opportunity Gaps Meeting. On November 18, 2016, Chief Strategy and Partnerships Officer Brent Jones, Michael Tolley and Executive Director for Coordinated School Health Pat Sander hosted leaders from the City of Seattle, Casey Family Programs and the Gates Foundation to discuss Seattle Public Schools’ eliminating opportunity gaps priorities within the Superintendent’s 2016-17 SMART goals. The group is working together in creating school cultures and climate to maximize students’ access to high quality instruction and instructional time as well as addressing chronic absenteeism and disproportionate suspensions.

Meany Middle School Family Meeting. On Tuesday, November 22, School & Community Partnership staff, Audrey Querns, Creative Advantage Project Manager, attended the first family meeting for potential Meany Middle School Families led by Principal Chanda Oatis to discuss the Creative Advantage and arts plans for Meany next year. Staff gathered feedback for families hopes for arts and the new school.

Council for Large Public Housing Authorities. On November 22, Kathlyn Paananen, Housing and Education Manager, co-presented with Courtney Cameron, Strategic Advisor for Education, for a webinar on “Intergovernmental Partnerships Within the Housing and Education Sector), hosted by CLPHA, the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities. SHA and SPS were invited to attend to introduce their partnership and share their best practices. Twenty-eight people attended the webinar. A recording can be found, [here](#).

Somali Cultural Responsiveness Training at Aki Kurose. On Wednesday, November 23, School & Community Partnerships, Shukri Olow, hosted a Somali Cultural Responsiveness training was held at Aki Kurose in collaboration with the School & Family Partnerships Office. 80 people ranging from teachers, to CBO partners were in the training to learn more about the background, history, and the barriers that Somalis face in the education system. Teachers also had an opportunity to engage in activities that could then be incorporated in classroom instruction. So far, 4 schools have participated in the trainings, with 300+ SPS staff and CBO partners in attendance. Rainier Beach will be the next school to participate in the PD opportunity.

Seattle Council Parent Teacher Student Association (SCPTSA) Meeting. SCPTSA asked about several items:

- Advanced notice for PTSA time on the summer leadership institute schedule
- Follow up on the Family Engagement work (Harvard) that we have been part of for three years
- Teaching tolerance materials as a follow up on the Black Lives Matter discussion
- 15 Seattle schools have joined the nation PTSA “School of Excellence” program

We presented information on the 20-minute longer day; the move to 24 credits; and the coming budget cuts. SCPTSA suggested some specific wording to help the public understand that this is primarily a legislative issue.

Upcoming Community Engagement:

Student Assignment Plan Community Meetings: the following meetings have been scheduled to share information about changes to the Student Assignment Plan. The final meeting will be held on December 5, 2016 in the John Stanford Center Auditorium, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Four meetings were recently held: November 21, 2016 in the Chief Sealth International High School Library; November 28, 2016 in the Franklin High School Library; November 30, 2016 in the Nathan Hale High School Library; December 1, 2016 in the Ingraham High School Lunchroom. Interpretation services were made available.

Upcoming Items

- See the attached Jigsaw Update
 - See the attached Indian Heritage Data
- See the attached SPS Equity Funding List

Larry

Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Update: Attached please find Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Michael Tolley’s update for this week.

Associate Superintendent for Facilities & Operations Update: Attached please find Associate Superintendent for Facilities & Operations Flip Herndon's update for this week.

Assistant Superintendent for Operations Update: Attached please find Assistant Superintendent for Operations Pegi McEvoy's update for this week.