

Date: Thursday, October 27, 2016
To: Larry Nyland, Superintendent
From: Michael F. Tolley, Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning
Re: Friday Memo for October 28, 2016

DIVISION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

Department of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction:

Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction (CAI) Department Retreat

The first retreat under the new leadership of the CAI department was held on Friday, October 21st. The theme of the retreat was “Building Collaboration and Coherence to Eliminate the Opportunity Gap.” Several activities underlined the urgency to improve a coherent and targeted response to assist schools in attacking the opportunity gap. Department staff engaged in an agenda item that helped to connect their own work to Superintendent SMART Goal #1. Staff were introduced to the cycles of inquiry that principals are engaging in, and discussion took place on how CAI could support the implementation in schools. Finally, Human Resources’ Assistant Superintendent, Clover Codd, and Keisha Scarlett, Director of Professional Growth, introduced CAI staff to the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) project. Both the cycle of inquiry and PAR presentations were intentionally designed to expand CAI staff’s understanding of other department’s initiatives and to pave the way for discussions on how to better align CAI’s work with other gap-eliminating efforts.

English Language Arts Formative Practices Institute, Cohort II

Seventy teachers attended session one of the Formative Practices Institute (FPI) on Tuesday, October 25th. FPI is a program of professional development for teams of teachers grouped by grade level. FPI was designed to help the district, through the work of the Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction (CAI) department, support teachers as they work to eliminate opportunity gaps.

Teachers spent the day unpacking grade level reading standards in order to build collective understanding of grade level concepts, knowledge and skills. In professional learning communities, teachers collaboratively built teaching charts to clarify learning targets, created instructional responses to students in need of additional supports and generated strategies and a list of resources to extend learning opportunities to students who have already mastered the standards.

Number of schools in attendance:

Elementary schools: 13
Middle schools: 3
High schools: 1

Themes from Exit Tickets

What teachers liked:

- Examining the progression from year to year

- Developing common understandings of the vague language in the standards
- Making the anchor charts to focus on one grade level standard
- Having time to collaborate with colleagues
- Designing plans to support struggling learners
- Examining evidence tables to clarify learning outcomes

Suggestions for improvement:

- Provide strategies for students who are not meeting standard
- Show videos of effective Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and teachers addressing needs of struggling students
- Support needed for PLC facilitation
- Provide resources to support readers and learners

Department of Early Learning:

The Department of Early is offering several professional development opportunities for teachers in grades kindergarten, 1st and 2nd.

- High Quality Kindergarten and 1st Grade
- High Quality 2nd Grade
- Continuing High Quality Kindergarten and 1st Grade Learning Labs

The first sessions of the *Continuing High Quality Kindergarten and 1st Grade Learning Labs* were held October 10-21. This professional development (PD) is a collaboration between Cathy Feldman of REACH Associates, the Early Learning PD Coaches, Capacity Builder Teachers from 3 elementary schools. There are 3 cohorts of teachers who participated in the PD. This model was developed from reflections and feedback from the past several years of PD sessions and is driven by the need to continue to offer high quality PD. In Reggie Routman's description of teaching with a sense of urgency, in her book Reading Essentials, she says, "I'm not talking about teaching prompted by anxiety but rather about making every moment in the classroom count, about ensuring that our instruction engages students and moves them ahead, about using daily evaluation and reflection to make wise teaching decisions. Complacency will not get our students where they need to be." It is our hope that this model helps to continue the quest to guide teachers into making every moment in the classroom count.

The Model:

Cathy Feldman met with the Early Learning PD Coaches to design a course to develop teacher leaders who have strong instructional practices in the components of balanced literacy. These teacher leaders are now known as Capacity Builder Teachers. Once the Capacity Builder teachers were identified, Cathy worked with the PD Coaches and Capacity Builder Teachers to calibrate their instruction in the Interactive Read Aloud/Shared Reading with the Daily Message and Learning Stations/Independent Reading and design a PD for kindergarten and 1st grade teachers. This past week, Cathy, the PD Coaches and the Capacity Builder Teachers led the first of 3 PD sessions to about 10-15 teachers (in each cohort). The Capacity Builder teachers taught the lessons to the students in their classroom while Cathy, the PD Coaches, and the participants observed and took notes. Each lesson was debriefed using the College and Career Common Core

Standards and the Core Habits of Teaching and Learning. Participants then planned lessons in each of the components.

In this course teachers will meet as a group 3 times. In between in each session, participants will engage in a Schoology course that will be led by the PD Coaches and the Capacity Builder Teachers. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in discussions about instructional practices, content and classroom management as well as share their lessons with their cohort.

Department of School Operations along with the Department of Enrollment Planning:

Highly Capable Cohort Planning

A survey was provided to Cascadia families, Thornton Creek families, families of students identified as Highly Capable but not enrolled, and staff at both schools regarding their preferences for the potential split of Cascadia and use of the Thornton Creek Campus or Cedar Park building to serve Highly Capable Cohort (HCC) students. The majority of respondents between the two communities preferred the use of the Decatur building with a geo-split. This would result in a second pathway for the North end.

District staff has shared the survey results with the school leaders at Cascadia and Thornton Creek and met on Tuesday, October 25, 2016 to review the results, prepare a recommendation for the School Board, and discuss next steps.

Cascadia Survey Results

The survey on how to accommodate all of the current eligible and enrolled north end elementary HCC students listed six options which included the use of the Decatur building, the Cedar Park building, and Cascadia's new site with portables. Survey results are below.

502 Respondents

- 89.6% current HC Cascadia parents/guardians
- 5.8% Cascadia Staff
- 4.6% HC qualified, not at Cascadia parents/guardians

Top First Choices

- **41.7%** responded they would prefer current and future Cascadia students be housed in the Decatur building with a Geo-Split. Decatur would become a new pathway school.
- **26.6%** responded they would prefer Cascadia remain one school with the Decatur building serving students in grades 1 and 2, and Cascadia's new site would serve students in grades 3-5.
- **22.3%** responded they would prefer portables be added to the new Cascadia site.

Top Ranked Last Choices

- **34.3%** responded that adding portables to the new Cascadia site was their least favorable option.
- **28.7%** ranked HCC be integrated with Thornton Creek rather than remain self-contained as their least favorable option.

- **16%** responded Cedar Park be used to house grades 1-2 of Cascadia as their least favorable option.

Additionally, only **1.4%** of respondents said they would enroll at Cedar Park if it were open as an option school with an emphasis on advanced learning. 60.8% said they would not enroll, and 37.7% said they would need more information.

Thornton Creek Survey Results

A survey on the potential uses of the Decatur building to serve HCC was provided to Thornton Creek families and staff. Three options which all utilized the Thornton Creek campus were provided. Survey results are below.

271 Respondents

- 95.9% current Thornton Creek parents/guardians
- 4.1% Thornton Creek Staff

Top First Choices

- **45.5%** responded they would prefer current and future Cascadia students be housed in the Decatur building with a Geo-Split. Decatur would become a new pathway school.
- **45.5%** responded they would prefer Cascadia remain one school with the Decatur building serving students in grades 1 and 2, and Cascadia's new site would serve students in grades 3-5.

Top Ranked Last Choices

- **81.9%** ranked HCC be integrated with Thornton Creek rather than remain self-contained as their least favorable option.

Additionally, only **10.3%** of respondents said they would enroll at Cedar Park if it were open as an option school with an emphasis on advanced learning. 37.7% said they would not enroll, and 52.4% said they would need more information.

School Truncation Recommendations:

Meany Middle School will reopen as a comprehensive middle school in the fall of 2017 and this additional middle school capacity is an exciting opportunity for middle school aged students across the district. As a result, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) is considering a grade truncation of the middle school grades at Madrona K-8 and Orca K-8. Both Madrona K-8 and Orca K-8 currently serve students in grades kindergarten through eight. Any change in the grades served at Madrona and Orca would be subject to School Board approval. If the Board approves a grade truncation, Madrona and Orca would no longer serve students in grades 6-8 beginning in the 2017-18 school year when Meany Middle School reopens. Madrona and Orca would continue to serve students in grades K-5 as an attendance area elementary school. The following is a summary of the community engagement process and resulting recommendations:

Madrona K-8 Truncation

Madrona K-8 is significantly under-enrolled in grades 6-8 (with 15 sixth graders, 25 seventh graders, and 22 eighth graders, as of October 1, 2016), and the middle school enrollment continues to decline each year. The low middle school enrollment results in staffing and scheduling challenges that limit opportunities for middle school students at Madrona. With the opening of Meany Middle School in fall of 2017, current Madrona families will have access to a new middle school option.

In September and again on October 20, 2016, central office staff from Enrollment Planning and Teaching and Learning facilitated community conversations at Madrona K-8 to gather feedback and discuss the timeline of a potential truncation of Madrona from a K-8 to a K-5. The Madrona principal sent several communications to her families through email and traditional mail, and provided information prominently in the main office. She solicited feedback from families who could not attend one of the meetings by sending home feedback forms and providing feedback forms to parents during dismissals. Another community meeting will be held at Madrona specially for middle school families to provide more information on their options if the recommendation to truncate Madrona is approved by the Board.

The district plans to move forward with the recommendation to truncate Madrona in 2017-18. This recommendation will be included in the changes to the Student Assignment Plan, which is scheduled to be presented at the November 17, 2016 Operations Committee.

Orca K-8 Truncation

On Monday, October 17, 2016, Seattle Public Schools district staff from Teaching and Learning and Enrollment Planning facilitated a community conversation with the Orca K-8 community to discuss the potential truncation of Orca from a K-8 to a K-5 and hear community feedback. About 70 families attended the meeting, and the attendees voiced their concerns about the potential truncation of Orca. The community cited the new initiatives at the school, particularly at the middle school level, and the fact that the school has named a new head teacher for the middle school.

Based on the new initiatives in place and the feedback received at the meeting, the district has decided not to move forward with a recommendation to truncate Orca at this time.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Department of Advanced Learning:

In response to additional questions and requests for data following the October 5th Advanced Learning School Board Work Session, we have **attached the following documents:**

- Appeal Data: Advanced Learning Appeals for 2011-2015
- Growth in HC Eligibility: Chart of 15-16 and 16-17 eligibility data by race, including growth percentage
- Total Advanced Learning Eligibility Growth by race, year: Advanced Learning eligibility growth for 2011-2015

Highly Capable Cohort Curriculum

One of the questions raised after the work session on Advanced Learning was a question regarding what curriculum is used for the Highly Capable Cohort (HCC) classrooms. There has been no independent instructional materials adoption for HCC classrooms. HCC schools are provided with the Board adopted instructional materials, modify it for advanced students, and access supplementary resource materials to allow for the “enhanced curricula, appropriately differentiated instruction, deeper learning opportunities, and/or accelerated pacing” called for in Superintendent Procedure 2190. Members of the Advanced Learning team participate in instructional materials adoption committee work to ensure that materials under consideration provide the depth, complexity, and extension opportunities to engage highly capable students. While there was Board discussion of an HCC (previously Accelerated Progress Program) Humanities Curriculum for Middle Schools at the meeting on November 20, 2013, no funding was forthcoming to realize that initiative. However, prior to the 2016-17 school year, unspent funds were used to purchase Humanities Curriculum materials for Washington, Jane Addams, and Madison Middle Schools, including resource binders and novels specifically requested by the teachers involved. Teachers at these schools also met a number of times to ensure curriculum alignment for the HCC programs at their schools. The fourth SPS HCC middle school (Hamilton) did not participate in this process.

ANNUAL REPORT

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
- Withdrawal Reasons by Age of Student, Grade