

Date: Thursday, October 6, 2016
To: Larry Nyland, Superintendent
From: Michael F. Tolley, Associate Superintendent for Teaching & Learning
Re: Friday Memo for October 7, 2016

DIVISION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:

Department of Special Education:

The Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss recently conducted a program review and provided recommendations regarding the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) services in Seattle Public Schools (SPS). In response to recommendations, modifications to DHH services have been implemented.

This year, the DHH program at Eckstein Middle School was collapsed and services were modified and expanded at TOPS K8 school. Recently, a meeting and school tour was held at TOPS. Attendees included an SPS Board Member, TOPS Principal, Chief of Student Support Services, Special Education Supervisor, and DHH teaching staff. Items discussed were the two distinct DHH classes at TOPS: An American Sign Language/Bilingual class and an Auditory/Verbal Skills class, DHH curriculum, improvements in technology, as well as increased teaming and collaboration within the TOPS community. These significant changes in DHH services at TOPS are part of our district-wide continuous DHH improvement efforts.

Department of Instructional Leadership:

On Wednesday, September 28, 2016, a School Board Oversight Work Session on the work of Executive Directors of Schools was held. During the Work Session, the following questions were asked and a request was made that responses be included in the Friday Update to the School Board.

1. What are the advantages/disadvantages of vertical vs. horizontal structures?

Response: The supports of principals by Executive Directors of Schools (EDS) could be aligned by any number of factors. For example, they could be arranged by level, region, novice vs. experienced, or by professional learning communities.

In regard to vertical or horizontal structure, both have value. Districts typically go back and forth every 5-6 years between the two. Districts need both: K-12 alignment/feeder patterns (regions) ideally provides clear pathway alignment between school K-12. Horizontal alignment (by elementary, middle, K8, and high school) tend to focus on grade level specific mastery and focus that is system-wide which can lead to more intentional, systemic supports for schools based on a "level" focus.

If we were going to change the structure, the change would be predicated on how this change would support principals, teachers, students and their families more effectively. Additionally, in order for a change to occur, other parts of our system would need to change or shift their work in order to support such changes. For example, if we were to move to supporting schools by level, this would require human resources to change how they align and support individual schools.

2. Where are we on a site-based vs. district-wide continuum?

Response: We are moving gradually from site-based to a more consistent, accountable system of schools. Under prior administrations, principals were seen as CEOs of their schools which resulted in principals and schools being in direct competition with each other for enrollment and limited resources. Since that time, federal standards, testing, and certification requirements that did not exist at that time have been added. As a system, the School District is moving towards greater consistency in Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIPs), Multi-tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS), Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Formative Assessments, Early Release/Late Starts, and High School Scheduling.

A foundational element of the collective bargaining agreement between Seattle Public Schools (SPS) and the Seattle Education Association (SEA) is site-based decision making. Buildings, through the site-based decision making process, have direct input on school budget development, scheduling, and professional development.

3. The district sometimes removes teachers/principals or counsels them out. Does that accountability extend to district leaders/EDSs?

Response: Yes, the standards for employment and accountability for SPS employees are all aligned to standards. Where there are performance concerns, there must be clear expectations of job performance, opportunities must be given for the employee to address concerns, appropriate notice must be given to the employee when performance has not improved or directions not followed. This process, when followed, results in clear evidence and documentation of performance and may result in termination, resignation, or a settlement agreement.

4. Do we know how consistent the span of control numbers is across the school districts?

Response: We will need to do more research for districts that similar to ours. Some districts do assign duties to EDS in addition to the supervision and evaluation of principals while others do not. The Chief of Schools will complete further research to highlight how and why similar size school districts are designing the role of the EDS and their span of control.

The issue of evaluation between a principal and an executive director are not analogous. Principals are limited to 25 certificated evaluations, however, they evaluate teachers who are in one building with one culture, who are doing mostly the same classroom duties. Executive

Directors of Schools have 20 different locations, across levels (elementary, middle, and high) with 20 different cultures, hundreds of teachers and thousands of students and family/communities to serve. The large numbers of schools and the proximity of those schools makes the job of the EDS different and unique from the evaluative caseload of building principals.

5. What expectations do we have for principals/EDSs problem solving?

Response: Ideally, as a system, we want all problems to be addressed and/or solved at the lowest level in the organization as possible, which would mean that we start at the school building and gradually escalating from there. Historically systemic issues which could be dealt with at the building level have been erroneously escalated centrally in the form of grievances, HIB (harassment, intimidation, and bullying) complaints, investigations up to the Human Resources (HR) Department that has generated a huge backlog for staff to be able to bring to resolution.

For the upcoming school year, as a part of our School Board SMART Goal 5, we will be providing principals, Executive Directors of Schools and appropriate central office leaders, training in problem solving, engaging in workplace conflict and mediation. We are working with SEA and HR to design Building Leadership Team (BLT) Training that will focus on the technical and adaptive processes.

6. How do we balance the needs of novice and experienced principals?

Response: In addition to the supports novice principals receive from their Executive Directors of Schools, novice principals receive formalized supports in the form of one on one coaching from principal leadership coaches, as well as cohort specific monthly professional development over a three-year period of time. The relationship between a novice principal and principal leadership coach is based on a peer to peer, non-evaluative fashion. All principals regardless of experience, receive coaching, supervision, and evaluation support by Executive Directors of Schools. Experienced principals needing additional supports outside those provided by the Executive Directors of Schools are eligible to receive mentoring from a peer provided by the Principal Peer to Peer Mentoring/Coaching Program which assigns an experienced principal to meet with experienced principals to provide intentional peer to peer mentoring from one experienced principal to another.

7. What are our priorities for creating greater consistency district-wide?

Response: There are many priorities district-wide that the Executive Directors of Schools are committed to focusing on as a part of their work with principals. Specifically, Executive Directors of Schools are working with principals to align their professional goals and cycles of inquiry to 2016/17 School Board priorities 1,2, and 5. Additionally, EDS are aligning their work with principals systemically on Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIPs), Multitier Systems of Supports (MTSS), Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and special education are some of our current priorities which EDS are working to

support principals and central office leaders in striving for greater clarity/consistency system-wide..

Last spring, the EDS job description was revised, in part to provide greater clarity of the role of Executive Directors to support building principals as instructional leaders while at the same time clarifying their role as leaders of central office. Part of that job description was changed to include problem solving/community engagement as an essential job function which EDS' will be evaluated.

Department of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction:

A School Board Director recently asked if schools are using the approved Math in Focus instructional materials.

We are able to immediately report that the School District's order and re-order of consumable items reflect the widespread presence of the materials necessary for student usage. In 2015-16, 27,278 copies of K-5 Math in Focus consumable workbooks were purchased at \$505,383.

For 2016-17, 24,772 copies of K-5 Math in Focus consumable workbooks were purchased at \$456,978. The difference is likely that there were some unused workbooks left over from 15-16. Given our total student population of 55,000 K-12 students, the number would appear to be typical of a normal annual replenishment order.

In order to support math teachers' ability to teach Math in Focus, last year a scope and sequence was developed with teacher and principal input that follows the pacing and order of the textbook. After previewing Unit 1, 75% of respondents have reported that the scope and sequence is helpful in teaching Math In Focus. As the school year progresses, additional scope and sequence materials will be made available as teachers move through the units.

Additionally, as part of the implementation, Math in Focus professional development for teachers new to the Seattle Public Schools is being held on 11/2/16. Trainers from the publisher are coming to the Stanford Center to conduct the session.

Department of English Language Learners and International Programs:

Competency/Proficiency High School Credit for World Languages Annual Report of Superintendent Procedure 2409

Seattle Public Schools is in its 6th year of offering Competency-Based World Language Credit testing opportunities to students who speak, understand, read and write in a world language other than English. Since 2011, hundreds of students, including a number of 8th grade Dual Language Immersion as well as English Language Learner (ELL) students, have qualified to earn 1-4 World Language credits in languages such as Spanish, Mandarin, Japanese, Arabic, Amharic, Nepali, Vietnamese, Somali and others.

Attached is a summary of World Language Competency-Based credit test results for Seattle Public Schools for 2015-2016. This year, **436 students tested in 29 languages** with 56% of them qualifying for 4 credits, 21% for 3 credits, 18% for 2 credits, and 55 for 1 credit. **Total credits earned was 1,429 at a testing cost of about \$25,674, or \$18 per credit.** (Attachment A.)

As of June 2016, **125 seniors** also qualified for the Seal of Biliteracy this year by earning 4 Competency-Based Credits in a language other than English through World Language Credit testing over the past several years, and **190 younger students** have also completed testing to earn the Seal as seniors in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020. (Attachment B.)

From 2012-2014, Seattle received funding for the testing from the Road Map World Language Credit Program, a grant funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through the Road Map ELL Work Group. In 2014, the Road Map ELL Work Group produced and then translated a video about the program dubbed into the top languages of Seattle and South King County <https://www.weareoneamerica.org/world-language-credit-translations>. This has been an effective tool for informing students, families, community members, and educators about this opportunity. That initiative has now expanded into the “Building Bilingual Pride” Campaign in June 2016, highlighting the World Language Credit Program, Seal of Biliteracy (for high school seniors), and the Speak Your Language home language campaign. (See the [Building Bilingual Pride brochure](#) Attachment C.)

The English Language Learners and International Programs Department has added a new web page with expanded information about World Language Credit Testing: http://www.seattleschools.org/students/academics/international_education/world_language_credit_testing/, and we have already scheduled testing dates at the new location of the Seattle World School 1698 E Union St, Seattle, WA 98122 Saturday mornings at 10:00 am: 10/8/2016, 10/22/2016, 11/19/2016, 12/10/2016, 1/21/2017, 2/11/2017, 3/11/2017, and 4/01/2017. We are working with all of the high schools to encourage them to offer after school or Saturday testing opportunities at their schools, as well, to make it more convenient for students who have difficulty traveling to the Seattle World School on a Saturday.

For the past several years, ELL and International Programs have sponsored 11th and 12th graders from any high school across the district (both ELL and general education) to complete the tests. Currently, 9th and 10th graders are not sponsored by the district, so they have to pay for their tests on their own (from about \$40-\$180, depending on the language). Last spring, we piloted offering testing at the three International Middle Schools (Denny, Mercer, and Hamilton). The interest and success rate were very strong. We would like to expand the opportunity for testing to at least ELL 8th graders across the district. In general, with the new graduation requirement of 2 credits of a World Language, it would be very advantageous to sponsor students in 9th and 10th grade for testing as well. We hope that the district will be able to allocate funds to support this effort.

Prepared 10/6/2016 for the Seattle School Board
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ELL and International Programs

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Competency-Based Credit Testing Summary 2015-2016
- Attachment B: Seal of Biliteracy Summaries for June 2016 and Future Years
- Attachment C: Building Bilingual Pride Brochure