

# Board Special Meeting



2445 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134

Executive Committee  
Thursday, April 7, 2016, 8:30-10:30am  
Board Office Conference Room, John Stanford Center

## Minutes

### Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am. Directors Patu, Peters and Geary were present. The meeting was staffed by Deputy Superintendent Stephen Nielsen, General Counsel Noel Treat, Assoc. Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Michael Tolley, Dir. of Policy, Board Relations & Special Projects Erinn Bennett, Temporary Board Office Manager Lauren Fode, and Board Office Administrator Annya Ritchie. Directory Harris arrived at 8:33 am and Director Burke arrived at 9:45 am.

### Approval of Agenda:

Director Peters moved to approve agenda. Director Patu seconded. The agenda passed unanimously.

### Approval of March 3, 2016 and March 12, 2016 Meeting Minutes:

Director Peters moved to approve the meeting minutes. Dir. Patu seconded. Minutes for March 3, 2016 and March 12, 2016 Executive Committee meeting minutes were approved 2-0.

### Discussion and/or Action:

#### **I. Review of the April 20 and May 4 Legislative Sessions Agendas**

**April 20<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting Agenda:** Erinn Bennett reviewed April 20<sup>th</sup> (4/20) and May 4<sup>th</sup> (5/4) legislative agendas respectively. Ms. Bennett noted the student performance for 4/20 meeting. Lauren Fode clarified the group may be represented by a few students and the performance director would show a video of the group. Dir. Peters vocalized concerns regarding technical preparedness for this presentation. Ms. Fode noted that staff are aware of the needs. Dep. Supt. Nielsen noted the equipment issues experienced at last night's Board Meeting was due to news crews' use of wireless microphones in the lobby. Ms. Fode stated the communications department will be sending notice to members of the press regarding the frequencies that cause disruptions and the use of microphones in the building.

Ms. Bennett asked about potential action items that might be considered for moving to the consent agenda. Directors and staff discussed moving Final Acceptance items identified as Action items 3, 4, 5 and 8 to move to consent. Director Harris commented on the preparedness of Action item 6 for consent. Flip Herndon noted this item has not gone to bid and was scheduled to be updated prior to the 4/20 meeting.

Ms. Bennett further discussed the Introduction items listed. She noted that items 2 & 3 are

pending the work session scheduled to be held prior to the Board Meeting. Depending on those work sessions, these items may or may not be on the final agenda. Ms. Fode noted Introduction item No. 5 was removed from the agenda, as this item needed to go back to committee and will now be presented at the 5/4 meeting for Introduction. Director Geary requested clarification on project movement. Assoc. Supt. Tolley noted that the project is going forward for committee review. Directors and staff discussed Introduction item no. 8, and noted clarification on timing of action report for Board approval.

Director Peters moved to approve the 4/20 agenda as amended. Director Harris seconded. The motion to approve the April 20, 2016 Board Meeting agenda as amended passed unanimously.

**May 4<sup>th</sup> Board meeting agenda:** Ms. Bennett provided an overview of the May 4, 2016 Board Meeting agenda. She noted the Seattle Public Schools (SPS) State Champion Teams recognition is scheduled. Ms. Bennett noted the approval of the April 27 meeting minutes may move to the May 18 agenda depending on work load and turnaround time. Directors and staff discussed items listed as action items that may be moved to consent. Director Peters asked if there may be any unforeseen changes to the academic calendar, listed as Action item 4. Staff indicated that no changes are expected. Discussion occurred regarding mid-winter break and the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) influencing part of the academic calendar. Directors and staff suggested moving Action item 4, school year calendar, to the consent agenda.

Staff noted that Action item no. 8 may be incorrect as was noted in the corresponding Introduction item on 4/20's agenda. Staff will follow up and adjust the agendas accordingly. Discussion occurred on Introduction item no. 4. Director Harris asked for clarification on the reason for pulling the item from the Audit & Finance Committee agenda. Dep. Supt. Nielsen noted the importance of specificity for this item and acknowledged that the item was not ready to present. They further discussed the project timeline and funding resources.

Dr. Herndon presented an overview of Introduction items 6 to 10. He noting some items may move to different agendas due to projected timing and readiness for the designated Operations Committee meeting. Director Harris requested clarification regarding "underspend transfer" in item no. 8. Dr. Herndon discussed the contingency funding model for building projects. These funding designs provide the project the ability to fill in any financial gaps that may be unforeseen at the beginning of the project. He cited that some projects close without using these contingency funds where others do. Contingency funds roll into future project contingency needs. Directors and staff further discussed the appropriate use of these types of funds in relation to building needs.

Director Peters moved to approve the May 4 Board Meeting agenda as amended pending subsequent work sessions and committee meetings as discussed. Director Harris seconded the motion. The motion to approve the May 4, 2016 Board Meeting agenda as amended passed unanimously.

## **II. Board Action Items**

### **Board Self Evaluation & Board Code of Conduct**

Ms. Bennett requested consolidation of today's agenda items 1 & 2 for discussion purposes.

Ms. Bennett noted items 1 & 2 are placeholders pending results of the work session scheduled for this afternoon. Both items have been modeled after last year's Self-Evaluation and Code of Conduct with the understanding that changes can be/will be made according to current Directors' requests as a result of the pending work session this evening. Directors and staff further discussed the origin and ownership of these items. Director Peters suggested that the Executive Committee take ownership of these items, and Director Harris concurred. Director Patu asked for clarification on the repercussions of breaking the Code of Conduct. Ms. Bennett noted that this topic has come up in previous years and will most likely be a topic of discussion at the work session. Currently the repercussions are not clearly defined. General Counsel Noel Treat identified that limitations exist in holding Directors accountable to the Code of Conduct. He further noted that the Board can address the misconduct at a public meeting to go on record; however, unless there are clear ethical violations other legal ramifications may be limited.

Director Peters made a motion to move both of these items forward, as amended, for consideration, pending the work session. Director Harris seconded. The motion as amended passed unanimously.

### **2016/17 School Year Calendar**

Ms. Bennett reiterated that this item has been moved to reflect introduction on 4/20 and action on 5/4. Clover Codd confirmed the 2016-2017 school year calendar meets requirements as set forth in the negotiated CBA. Dr. Codd noted the work still existing in the 609 employees work year calendar. Director Peters requested further clarification regarding who are considered 609 employees. Directors and Staff discuss work load during summer time months and the subsequent effects on SPS staff and building/site needs. Dr. Herndon confirmed that a majority of site/building maintenance and landscaping work is initiated and completed during these months. He continued to note that these jobs make up the majority of 609 labor. Directors Geary and Harris vocalized concerns for landscaping and grounds upkeep during the summer. Dr. Herndon confirmed landscapers are hired to attend to site needs and that they are best done when students are not in the building during summer months. Dep. Supt. Nielsen noted that there is a pattern of increased work right before school starts. The SPS staff tends to work hard the last few days tying up any loose ends that are necessary prior to students returning. Staff noted that summer school programs can delay some projects which can create the need to work up until the last day of summer break.

Director and staff discussed the historical timing of mid-winter break and the influences of the recently negotiated CBA. Mr. Tolley noted changes will occur in the future when the schools adjust to the state mandated 24 credit requirements, and noted looking into a trimester schedule. Ms. Codd expressed that changes to the school year calendar would require labor negotiations. Director Patu reminded the group of concerns regarding breaks in instructional time due to extended vacations. Assoc. Supt. Tolley also noted the structure of bell time's influence on the calendar structure for the 2017-18 school year. Director Peters asked to confirm if anything other than what was addressed in the discussion is pending on this topic. Ms. Codd confirmed that nothing else was pending and that the 609 issues do not affect the school year calendar being discussed here. Ms. Codd noted the action report will reflect new introduction and action dates as discussed.

Director Peters made a motion to move this item forward for approval. Director Harris seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Amending Policy Nos. H01.00, F21.00 and 2200**

Directors and Staff discussed the need for continued discussion on these policy revisions and identified continued work on definitions to certain vocabulary in order to maintain consistency. They noted the work done between legal, staff, and Director Peters in the drafting of the action report and documents. Directors and staff discussed demonstrating a need for transparent understanding of definitions and how the Board is notified of certain aspects of interdepartmental decisions as well as the term “site.” Mr. Treat confirmed that staff is working on clarification to certain key terms such as “site.” Dep. Supt. Nielsen expressed concerns around timing of this item and various misunderstandings around scheduling and progression on this item. Director Peters, Dep. Supt. Nielsen, and staff discussed common and individual concerns and agreed on a plan moving forward to include a work session that will be scheduled prior to the May 4 Board meeting consisting of at least the committee chairs and key staff. Pending the work session, this item is scheduled to go to introduction on May 4 and action on May 18. Directors and staff agreed that open discussion and continued partnership in drafting these revisions are necessary and forthcoming. It was noted that not all Directors are inclined to have another work session on this topic. Dep. Supt. Nielsen voiced agreement that although the last work session addressed some core issues, there are still a lot of items to be worked through. He noted the need to be conscientious about these revisions and encouraged a thoughtful approach. Director Peters noted to refrain from scheduling the work group during the week of spring break. Directors and staff discussed trying to schedule this meeting during the week of April 25<sup>th</sup>. Assoc. Supt. Tolley confirmed staff is reviewing suggested edits and providing feedback that will prove useful for the workgroup. Sherri Kokx noted the Communications department is reviewing the portion of the revisions that will impact their procedures. Ms. Kokx expressed that the department will continue to work on the communication process between staff, the Board, and the public and will provide input on how oversight might interact with their procedures/policies.

Directors requested clarification on any how many definitional issues exist. Mr. Treat confirmed there are a few. Directors asked that staff provide a list of concerns about revisions and any suggested resolutions to these concerns. There was continued discussion on the anticipated progression of the action report and miscommunications between parties. Directors Harris and Geary expressed the importance of feedback and input from staff. They further discussed the need for clear expectations of staff and how these policy revisions will affect the burden on staff in regards to timing of projects and moving them forward to the Board for action. Director Geary articulated a need to maintain practicality and flexibility in the process and to make words meaningful. The objective is to build and maintain trust for all involved - the public, the Board, and SPS staff. Director Harris identified a need to be conscious of changing all documents that potentially new definitions will appear in. Staff and Directors further discussed how to correctly define and the objective to prevent future misunderstandings that can be prevented with clear definitions and processes. There was understanding that regardless of how the School Board or SPS chooses to define such terms as “site” and “program”, the public will maintain their own definition that may or may not align with ours. Director Geary suggested the work group include past scenarios and identify the key areas of concern and analyze how the revisions in these policies will provide clarity and avoid miscommunication and understanding for future projects.

Director Peters made a motion to move this item to forward to the full Board as amended

pending the outcome of the to be scheduled work session. Director Harris seconded the motion as amended. This amended motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution 2015/16-15, Resolution to Consider Alternative Summative Assessments and Reaffirm Student Opt-Out Rights**

Discussion of this item was deferred until Director Burke's arrival.

**III. Special Attention Items**

**Approval of Regular Board Meeting Agendas**

Ms. Bennett indicated that during the capital project heavy seasons there are frequent changes to the action report timeline that requires more flexibility. Directors and staff discussed how to best approach changes to the Board's legislative agendas after they have been approved by the Executive Committee. There was discussion on the current process and burden it creates on staff and Directors. Ms. Bennett and Ms. Fode provided examples of when it would be necessary to remove items from the approved agendas. Directors asked how the proposed changes would improve the process while maintaining clear communication with the Board. There was further discussion on the activity that occurs on projects between the Executive Committee meeting and the Board Meeting and Directors agreed that the current system is not always efficient. Directors requested that if an action report is removed/delayed from an agenda then the Board President and Superintendent should be informed prior to removing it from the agenda. Regardless of the process, it is maintained that the Board is made aware of changes and why they were made. Director Peters & Harris expressed their agreement to an efficient process as long as they remain well-informed before the decision is made. Director Harris requested that email notification be specific and less wordy. Ms. Bennett reiterated the need for quick turnaround in these responses. Ms. Bennett confirmed with Directors that no response from them would indicate that the item can be removed from the agenda as requested. Director Patu stated that her practice as President is to include the other Directors on the Committee in the decision-making process and would like to maintain that practice. Ms. Bennett clarified that the removal of items from an approved agenda is expected to be minimal and further indicated that staff tries to present action reports as complete as they possibly can but that unforeseen things can occur that require items to be moved.

Director Burke arrived at 9:45am.

Directors expressed some apprehension to the action report process and communication to the public. There was discussion on the importance of Directors being informed and having the opportunity to review all items coming before the Board. There was an understanding that proper procedures will be followed so that the Executive Committee is aware of all projects coming before the Board. There was clarification that other committees cannot undo what the Executive Committee decides upon. Directors further discussed the difference between placeholder/tentative items and items that are more concrete in their timeline. Director Harris expressed agreement to an expedited process on making non-substantive changes, such as changes due to bid dates, etc. Directors discussed how notice of changes will be provided to Directors. Mr. Treat reminded Directors to not use the "reply all" method when responding to emails. Ms. Bennett identified the Committees policy, No. 1240., and the Executive Committees Charter on agenda review. Director Burke requested clarification on the process of

adding something to a Board Meeting Agenda after it has been approved by the Executive Committee. Ms. Bennett provided an overview of this process and that adding something to the Agenda would require the Executive Committee's approval, which would require a meeting. There was continued discussion on how the Executive Committee has dealt with these issues in the past. There was agreement that a protocol will be built for Board Office staff to follow in regards to removing and adding items to an Agenda after Executive Committee approval.

**Resolution 2015/16-15, Resolution to Consider Alternative Summative Assessments and Reaffirm Student Opt-Out Rights**

Director Burke reviewed the action report. He noted feedback received and the ongoing progress in drafting. Dir. Burke addressed the need to work out some language concerns prior to the action report going to the Board. There was discussion on the pros and cons to students opting out of testing. Directors clarified that assessments of student achievement are required and necessary. Noting that, this resolution is not intended to remove assessments and accountability measurements; rather, it is intended to address concerns around using standardized testing as a tool in analyzing educational milestones. Directors and staff further discussed the legal landscape and benefit analysis of standardized testing. There was conversation on the importance in the potential opportunity for SPS to lead in alternative ways to assessing student achievement and teacher productivity. Directors expressed their discontent on the recent legislative activity in Olympia. Directors conveyed a need for a proper analysis of district rights around standardized testing and opting out.

Directors and staff discussed the potential options the District has regarding district wide opt-out and implications. They further discussed the multilayered approach to the issue: one approach is to have a conversation with Legislators and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and collaborate to amend and adopt an alternative approach to local assessments of student achievement and instructional accountability. Directors and Staff continued to discuss borrowing language found in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to promote this resolution and subsequent plans. Director Burke discussed further two levels of alternative assessments in the ESSA, one of which is better utilizing the national tests already in place, such as SAT and ACT, for the high school level assessments. For other grade levels, innovative assessments should commence to provide a creative alternative to what currently exists. Director Burke reaffirmed the right timing to use the opt-out strategy to assess how our district actually compares. There was an agreement that the message is important and needs to be considered. He noted a consensus on how to accurately measure achievement and success without overloading the students and negatively impacting instructional time is necessary.

Director Peters discussed the Smarter Balanced test and how they are unfunded mandates from , conducted legislative acts at the expense of instructional time. She expressed appreciation to Director Burke and Mr. Treat in considering alternatives that do not require many extra resources and maintain the integrity of instructional time in our classroom. Director Geary noted lack of parallelism in the final paragraph and suggested a change in phrasing to maintain consistency and understanding throughout the policy. Mr. Treat stated that the resolution is still in draft version and will require more work to clean up accordingly. Assoc. Supt. Tolley noted that he has not had a chance to review the resolution and assess the potential unintended consequences and costs associated. Directors noted that the District is already absorbing costs associated with these tests. They further discussed the potential cost savings with using an alternate system. Directors asked about potential consequences for suspending tests until a

legislative resolution is obtained. There was discussion on legislative process and the effect it may have on our budget. Dep. Supt. Nielsen discussed the funding allocation process and unintended consequences tied into the “use it or lose it” funding model. Directors and staff continued to discuss the provisions of McCleary and ESSA and when the laws are deemed in effect.

Staff voiced concerns regarding new revisions and how the notification is provided to students and families and if these revisions create more burdens for the teachers. Clarification on when the resolution would be in effect and language needed to reflect the change was requested. Directors agreed on the necessity for clear and effective language within the resolution. There was continued discussion on the legal obligations surrounding assessments and testing and the importance that exists in the Seattle School District’s response to these new laws and mandates. There was agreement that continued discussion and thorough and thoughtful planning on this resolution is paramount. Director Harris encouraged the leads on this action report to reach out to community partners to get input. An understanding of buy-in from other districts outside of King County was discussed. There was continued discussion on the legal obligations regarding testing and funding pursued. Director Burke solidified the discussion with assertions of focusing on a common vision that best serves the students in the District, King County and the State of Washington, as well as understanding how these assertions and decisions aligns with the laws that apply.

Directors agreed that continued discussion and research will be done on this resolution so that it is presented in a way that will make the right impression on a state level while providing the best options for our students possible.

Director Harris made a motion to move this item forward to the full Board. Director Peters seconded.

Director Burke noted that he would prefer the item is moved forward for consideration.

Director Harris moved to amend her original motion and move this item forward to the full Board for consideration. Director Peters seconded this motion.

This amended motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Treat discussed the plan to move the item forward, which will include reaching out to community partners for input.

### **March 12 Board Retreat Follow up and June 4 Retreat Planning**

Directors and staff combined the discussion of Board Retreat Follow up and June 4<sup>th</sup> Retreat planning. Ms. Bennett discussed the results of the Board Retreat survey conducted. Ms. Bennett provided the list of topics of interest from the survey for the June Retreat. Topics included: cultural competency, budget/board policies and purpose, team building, communications protocol, and the 2016-17 board goals. Director Geary mentioned her suggested topic of choice, impacts of the new federal law, and how these affect the Board’s work moving forward.

Ms. Bennett discussed the need to identify if the retreat was going to include professional

development training that would require an outside source to facilitate. Director Peters expressed her desire to further examine Board goals at the next retreat. Director Peters suggested the Board goals should be a standing item at the Retreats. She further suggested more work sessions to be schedule on these goals. Ms. Bennett indicated a running list of work sessions currently requested to be scheduled.

Director Harris noted that if the topic of cultural competency and awareness are thoroughly examined at the retreat then she saw no issue with Board goals being a standing item. However, she expressed that equity training is essential. Dir. Harris suggested that Board goals be set as work sessions and the cultural competency training occur at the retreat rather than combining both items in one day. Director Peters articulated that these work sessions would have to occur soon. Ms. Bennett asked for clarification on if the retreat would consist of an all-day cultural competency type training or if it would share the time with another item of interest that was listed.

Director Patu stated that she would like to see the retreat consist of a combination of the topics listed. Ms. Bennett read list of provided options again. Directors discussed the timing of these topics and which one to include at the June Retreat. Director Peters brought up a need to hold a session or retreat on teaching to different learning styles. There was discussion between Directors and Staff on what this type of training would look like. There was discussion on combining related topics. They discussed the possible topics for a summit type event rather than a Board Retreat. Director Harris suggested that learning styles be removed for retreat purposes but be planned in another training opportunity capacity. Dep. Supt. Nielsen discussed the relationship between the SMART Goals and completion on these goals. Director Patu expressed the need to focus on two or three goals in order to create tangible results.

Director Peters provided feedback on using facilitators at the Board Retreat and suggested a presenter that could provide usable examples of community engagement. Directors and staff discussed the focus of community engagement presentations and their applicability to SPS goals. Dept. Supt. Nielsen acknowledged that experts in this area are usually focused on specific means of engagement, whereas our needs require a multifaceted approach.

Director Harris noted possibly inviting community partners to the community engagement portion and Director Patu asked for clarification on this request. Director Harris expressed a need to engage SPS partners in the conversation and mentioned the recent customer service/communications training that occurred and using inside resources for this type of training for the Board. Ms. Bennett discussed potentially using the “train the trainer” model. Heidi Henderson-Lewis, SPS Ombudsman, mentioned the need to work on historical communication issues with the public and to build bridges with the community as a whole. Directors and staff discussed keeping a focus on authentic and multifaceted communication with constituents. They further discussed combining efforts with the City and the Mayor’s Education Summit, and the need to focus on topics that would assist in efforts to provide tangible results in building positive community relationships and thus a better educational environment for SPS students.

Directors agreed to a retreat with three hours dedicated to Community Engagement and one hour dedicated to Board Governance Priorities. Director Harris suggested training to be done by Dep. Supt. Nielsen and Ms. Henderson-Lewis. Director Harris requested information to be provided to Directors prior to the Retreat on the material being presented so that Directors can

come prepared to engage in a meaningful discussion. Directors suggested a work group consisting of Dep. Supt. Nielsen, Director Harris, Jacque Coe, Ms. Henderson-Lewis, and any key staff who attended the earlier mentioned training. Director Peters requested that a cultural competency piece be worked in to this Community Engagement training.

#### **IV. Board Policies and/or Procedures**

#### **V. Routine Items**

##### **Community Engagement**

Ms. Henderson-Lewis discussed the communication department's efforts around Smart Goal No. 6. Ms. Henderson-Lewis noted progress to the development of customer service norms. She noted that the concept is to focus on 3-5 SPS standardized norms. Ms. Henderson-Lewis identified the use of the 5 "Rs" – responsive, respectful, reliable, ready (anticipate customer needs), and responsible (and accountable). The theory is to make it easy to remember, universal and relevant. The communications department is working on district-wide standards and how to implement them in each department. There will be continued discussion with department heads to put together standards that fit the needs of each department.

Director Harris asked for information on what the end product looked like and if the model was going to be implemented in all of the other buildings. Ms. Henderson-Lewis confirmed that thoughtful planning is occurring with regards to implementation of this customer relations model district wide. She noted that the department wants to ensure a meaningful process prior to implementation. Director Harris suggested gaining buy-in from the principals first and would like to keep the Board in the loop on how they could assist in getting this going.

##### **Board Calendar/Work Plan**

Ms. Bennett discussed work session requests including ones brought up during earlier discussions, such as the implications of ESSA and learning style differences. Directors and staff noted some calendar openings and pending work sessions to be scheduled. Ms. Bennett asked the Directors to prioritize work session topics to assist in scheduling.

Dep. Supt. Nielsen requested the narrowing of the program placement work session scheduled to occur during the week of April 25 to avoid duplication of discussion. Ms. Bennett provided historical reference toward development of the strategic plan. Dep. Supt. Nielsen suggested brainstorming ideas to improve Superintendent updates so that they are more engaging.

Directors and staff discussed focusing the May 25 work session on the budget. It was further noted that that results of the work session could impact strategic planning on spending. Director Harris requested to see the service based budget requests. Dep. Supt. Nielsen stated that they will provide the Directors with a soft document containing a wish list of items.

The meeting adjourned at 11:37am.