

FAMILIES, EDUCATION, PRESCHOOL, AND PROMISE LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

WebEx Meeting

Thursday, September 9, 2021

MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Dwane Chappelle called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m.

II. Attendees

Members Present: James Bush (on behalf of Superintendent Brent Jones), Trish Millines Dziko, Erin Okuno, Donald Felder, Stephanie Gardner, Susan Lee, Kimberly Walker, Lisa Gaccione (City Budget Office on behalf of Mayor Durkan)

Others Present: Dwane Chappelle (DEEL), Ismael Fajardo (DEEL), Monica Liang-Aguirre (DEEL), Marissa Rousselle (DEEL), Jonathan Swift (DEEL), Mei-Li Thomas (DEEL), Brian Goodnight (CBO), Heather Brown (SPS)

III. Reports

The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Dwane Chappelle, Director of the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) followed by a review of the meeting outcomes and agenda, LOC member roles and responsibilities, and Color Brave Space.

Discussion of FEPP Legislative Amendments

Marissa Rousselle, DEEL's Interim Director of Policy and Communications, led the discussion by reminding the Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) that the purpose of the special meeting was to obtain their vote to recommend the policy intent for the FEPP legislative amendments. The LOC was also reminded that the meeting's vote would not technically change budget authority or the FEPP spending plan, but may have budget implications that would sustain flexibility in response to COVID-19, while also adding, for example, new FEPP allowable expenses related to infant and toddler childcare. Policy objectives, such as the proposal to modify language to enable multi-year contracts and policy changes related to SPP Plus, were also highlighted.

The meeting continued with a review of the current legislative timeline, which included a presentation to City Council this month, the Mayor's transmittal of the legislation by the end of September, and a vote by full City Council prior to the start of the budget season.

Modified Language to Enable Multi-Year Contracts

Jonathan Swift, DEEL's Finance and Operations Director, further detailed the proposal for multi-year contracts. He stated that a clause in the FEPP Implementation and Evaluation Plan currently required the use of annual contracting processes. However, a modification to this language to enable multi-year contracts would not only enable more robust performance metrics with DEEL's contracts but would also lessen the number of contracts generated each year.

Policy Changes to SPP Plus

Monica Liang-Aguirre, DEEL's Early Learning Director, provided an overview of the proposed changes to SPP Plus. The first policy proposal would allow 3-year-olds with IEPs to enroll in SPP Plus classrooms as soon as they turned 3, as opposed to limiting enrollment to those who turned 3 before August 31st of that school year. She continued the overview with a summary of the SPP Plus program, which is a modification of the traditional SPP classroom currently offered at Seattle Public Schools (SPS) and within the experimental education unit at the University of Washington.

Heather Brown, Director of Early Learning at SPS, continued the overview by providing additional details about enrollment in SPP Plus and special education in early learning. She stated there were two paths for children to enter special education preschool services at SPS.

The first way is for children to be identified for services while receiving 0-3 services in the community. Once children are ready to transition from a community-based organization to SPS, a department within the school district works with children from the community-based organization through an evaluation, then into a preschool program of some capacity. The second way children come to SPS for special education is through the Child Find line. That is when a parent or caregiver of a child under the age of 5 contacts SPS with concerns about a child's development. SPS would then evaluate the child and potentially qualify the child for special education services.

In addition to hearing a list of additional services SPS provides (e.g., Therapy Only Services, Itinerant Services, SPP Plus and Head Start Plus, Developmental Preschool, and PCIS –Preschool Continuum of Intensive Services), LOC members were also informed of the current enrollment process for SPP Plus.

The overview concluded with an examination of the benefits and challenges associated with the proposed SPP Plus policy change:

Benefits

- Incoming 3-years-olds who would not typically qualify for full day programming will have access

- Expands inclusive opportunities
- IEP teams have additional programming options
- Increase language opportunities for students with disabilities

Challenges

- Wide age-range of children in the classroom
- COVID impacts to enrollment and participation
- Ongoing training and support needed for new staff and new classrooms

FEPP Legislative Amendment Vote

The LOC members in attendance voted on whether to move forward with the legislation amendments as presented during the meeting. The majority voted in favor of the legislative amendments as recommended.

Call for Volunteers

The meeting concluded with a call for LOC volunteers to review and approve draft letters on behalf of the full LOC body. The topics of the draft letters pertained to the 2020 FEPP Levy undesignated fund balance and the FEPP legislative amendments.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.