



DRAFT



City of Seattle

**FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY
LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**
Tuesday, January 23, 2007 • 4:30–6:00 p.m.
(rescheduled from January 16)
City Hall, 7th Floor

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Someireh Amirfaiz, Tim Ceis, Cheryl Chow, Frances Contreras, David Della, Marie Kurose, Raj Manhas

OTHERS PRESENT: Eric Anderson (Human Services Dept.), Tom Bailey (Middle School Support), Carla Bryant (Office for Education), Lin Carlson (Seattle Public Schools), Lori Chisholm (Seattle Parks), Jessica de Barros (OFE), Jerry DeGriek (HSD), Fausto DeGuzman (HSD), Donnie Grabowski (OFE), Sonja Griffin (HSD), Kathleen Groshong (HSD), Terry Hayes (HSD), Aimee Hirabayashi (MSSP), Kathie Huus (Parks), Mary Johnson (HSD), Lauren Lee (HSD), Patricia Lee (Council Central Staff), Patricia McInturff (HSD), Holly Miller (OFE), Thelma Payne (SPS), Ramona Pierson (SPS), Janet Preston (SPS), Anne Shields (Health), Sid Sidorowicz (OFE), Linda Rose Slater (SPS), Kristi Skanderup (MSSP), Tilman Smith (HSD), Viviana Ulloa (HSD), Margie Viall (HSD), Steve Wright (SPS), Billie Young (HSD)
University of Washington Students: Julie Draper, Jaclyn Gloger, Emma Flores, Anne Taylor, Isabel Perez-Torres

Tim Ceis called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. The minutes from the November 21, 2006 meeting were approved.

Briefing on 2005-2006 Families and Education Levy Annual Report

Holly Miller and Jessica de Barros gave a presentation outlining the major findings from the 2005-2006 Families and Education Levy Annual Report.

Early Learning

Jessica de Barros presented the data and lessons learned from Early Learning Programs.

Marie Kurose asked how many students would be assessed this year (2006-2007). H. Miller said all 388 pre-kindergarten students should be assessed this year. M. Kurose pointed out a large achievement gap in performance by African-American children. H. Miller cautioned care in interpreting the results of the assessment because the children assessed were not a representative sample; they just happened to be the students who were still enrolled when the assessments were done at the end of the year. By the time the assessments were done, several of the sites with the most African-American children enrolled were already closed. Sonja Griffin confirmed that few African-American children had been assessed.

Someireh Amirfaiz asked if African children are separated from African-American children for purposes of these statistics. S. Griffin said no.

David Della said the pre-kindergarten assessment should help reduce the achievement gap. H. Miller agreed, saying the assessment should be able to determine who is kindergarten-ready. She noted that the Seattle Public Schools' (SPS) strategic plan calls for the District to adopt a kindergarten readiness assessment for use in all kindergarten classrooms. Cheryl Chow said the goal is to make sure all children are ready for kindergarten. M. Kurose asked if the District is adopting an existing assessment or creating a new one. Ramona Pierson replied that the District will work with the City and the Alliance for Education to examine assessment tools and put out a Request for Proposals (RFP). The goal is to look at how students perform longitudinally. A kindergarten readiness assessment will help identify potential problems early in a child's education. H. Miller noted that Carla Bryant has been working with some Head Start programs to track outcomes for their students.

T. Ceis asked about the timeline for the District's RFP for the kindergarten readiness assessment. R. Pierson said the District would first identify criteria, issue an RFP, pilot the selected assessment, train teachers and develop a sustainable plan for implementing in all schools. She estimated a timeline of two years for this process to occur.

T. Ceis asked if the State had proposed funding for implementing an early learning assessment statewide. H. Miller said no, the kindergarten readiness assessment did not play a prominent role in the Washington Learns first steps for early learning. She said Seattle may want to work with the State to pilot one or more of the assessments they are considering. Raj Manhas emphasized the need for a statewide approach to assessment. T. Ceis asked if the State was considering funding a pilot in Seattle that could support a statewide effort. R. Pierson said there is some interest in doing so.

S. Amirfaiz asked who from the refugee immigrant groups would be at the table discussing criteria for selection of a school readiness assessment tool. C. Chow said the SPS has experts on staff from the District's bilingual program who will participate. H. Miller said one of the reasons for the State's slow-down in selecting an early learning assessment tool was to ensure the cultural competence of the tool.

Family Support and Family Involvement

J. de Barros presented the Family Support and Family Involvement outcomes.

R. Manhas said he has attended school meetings where children are reviewed for progress and he has been glad to see the Family Support Workers (FSWs) at the table. D. Della asked how FSW goals correspond with District overall goals for academic achievement. H. Miller said they are aligned because District staff, including FSWs, are selecting focus students and criteria include academic, social/emotional and family issues, among others. R. Manhas said he has asked SPS Chief Academic Officer Carla Santorno to become personally involved and acquainted with Levy programs to ensure goals are aligned and to support accountability.

T. Ceis complimented the work of the FSWs, stating he appreciates what they are doing. This program is a bright spot in the Levy's performance.

Frances Contreras asked if the FSW training addresses cultural diversity. Thelma Payne said the training does address cultural diversity, uses community resources, and assesses children based on their strengths.

M. Kurose said the Family Support & Family Involvement target for 2005-06 was low and asked if the target was higher for this year. J. de Barros said the target for 2006-07 is 10 percent value-added for this year. This means all students who “count” toward the target must be students who have not achieved academically in the past. H. Miller said the target would likely be raised substantially next year.

R. Pierson said a different definition of success is needed because the WASL grade-level to grade-level assessments do not necessarily correlate. M. Kurose offered another perspective, that intuitively, one would expect a student who has passed the WASL in one grade to pass the WASL the following year, even though the test is different. The assessments are based on grade-level expectations that guide what students are learning year-to-year. She said given the level of Levy investment, there should be higher expectations. Maybe a bonus for increased achievement among minority youth should be considered. R. Manhas said there has not been this level of focus on individual students before. We should celebrate success but aim higher.

Elementary Community Learning Centers

J. de Barros presented the Elementary Community Learning Center outcomes.

R. Pierson asked why the DRA and WASL results are combined. J. de Barros said the DRA is the only assessment available for first and second grades; both the DRA and WASL “count” toward Levy outcomes. Sid Sidorowicz said the data will be disaggregated between the WASL and the DRA in the appendix to the Annual Report.

D. Della asked if the Brighton Elementary Community Learning Center (CLC) had been closed because of resource issues or low quality. S. Amirfaiz asked what happened to the students at Brighton after the CLC closed. S. Sidorowicz said an after-school care program remains in the school. Billie Young noted that it is a licensed child care program.

M. Kurose noted that more Levy students are declining rather than improving in math, which may suggest a change in strategies. F. Contreras said math should be emphasized.

P. McInturff asked if the performance of Levy students was compared to other SPS students. J. de Barros replied that they were and the results are included in the presentation and the report.

S. Amirfaiz asked if the data were disaggregated for different immigrant groups. S. Sidorowicz said they were not, because the District does not collect data by immigrant status. The best proxy is to disaggregate by “language spoken at home” and “country of origin.”

R. Manhas said the District was doing well in reading and writing at the 4th grade level, but math remains a problem.

Middle Schools

J. de Barros presented the Middle School program outcomes.

M. Kurose said low outcomes again may indicate a need to reconsider strategies.

D. Della asked if the District was developing an assessment tool for the middle schools. R. Pierson said SPS is starting comprehensive math assessments at the middle school level and will collaborate with the City to provide the results. Aimee Hirabayashi said the District is not yet data-driven. There is not yet enough data available for teachers and schools to assess students. R. Pierson said math is assessed three times per year. Staff need coaching on how to use the assessments. Middle schools are beginning to align the curriculum with student needs, which can now be identified through the assessment process.

C. Chow said the math WASL scores are problematic. The District is not satisfied but has made significant progress. M. Kurose said the goal of the Levy is to serve those who are not doing well academically and should focus on students who have not met standards.

J. de Barros presented the outcomes for High-Risk Youth and Health programs.

Final Wrap-up Discussion

C. Chow asked if there had been any consideration of using Levy funds to increase family involvement and participation. H. Miller said most of the Levy programs include family involvement as a primary component. For example, the Parent-Child-Home program consists of two home visits per week for two years. Family Support and Family Involvement programs focus on involving parents in school life and in their child's learning. CLCs help to involve parents at the middle school level. Case managers in the Seattle Team for Youth always meet with families of the youth they serve.

T. Ceis summarized by saying he sensed a desire on the part of the LOC to change some approaches and to study some programs in more depth. F. Contreras said she would like to look at each program in more depth, even if it takes more meetings. H. Miller said the LOC would need to establish next year's targets by April or May so contracts can be written. T. Ceis said more meetings could be scheduled as necessary. The LOC decided to prioritize a few investment areas to look into further. It was agreed the February meeting would focus in depth on Early Learning and Middle School.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.