



DRAFT



FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY
Tuesday, February 10, 2009 • 4:00-5:30 p.m.
LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
7th Floor, City Hall

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wanda Brown (for Carla Santorno), Tim Burgess, Michael DeBell, Kris Hildebrandt, David Okimoto, John Pehrson

OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Aberg (Legislative), Carla Bryant (OFE), Lin Carlson (SPS), TJ Cosgrove (PHSKC), Jerry DeGriek (HSD), Kathleen Groshong (HSD), Becky Guerra (DOF), Kacey Guin (OFE), Bea Kelleigh (HSD), Lauren Lee (HSD), Patricia Lee (Council staff), Holly Miller (OFE), Alan Painter (HSD), Sid Sidorowicz (OFE)

Councilmember Tim Burgess called the meeting to order. After introductions, the minutes of the January 20, 2009, Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) were approved.

Kacey Guin reviewed the outcomes and annual report for the 2007-08 school year. She noted that, overall, Levy-funded programs were successful at achieving their outcomes. David Okimoto asked that the LOC be reminded of the three outcomes set for the Levy.

K. Guin noted that 909 Levy students met standards who had not done so in the previous year. John Pehrson asked how that compared with the total number of students who failed. K. Guin responded OFE had not prepared that data for the annual report. J. Pehrson and T. Burgess asked for OFE to provide such numbers in the future so the LOC could get context to determine the size of the effect the Levy is having.

K. Guin stated that 14% of middle school students in Levy-funded programs met standard on the 2008 WASL after failing in 2007. T. Burgess asked if that was enough of an increase and asked how it compared with other school districts. Michael DeBell responded that, as a School Board member, he believed a 14% improvement in meeting WASL standards was significant, especially after the elementary school years. He also noted that comparisons with other districts were hard to make since the characteristics of children and schools were different.

T. Burgess asked how the 14% improvement compared with the previous year. K. Guin responded that the percent improvement was the same as the previous school year, but the number of students improving in 2007-08 was higher. M. DeBell noted that WASL performance for the school district overall went down, so the improvement shown by Levy students was significant.

Lin Carlson pointed out that the Levy outcomes show only those students who met all standards for their grade level and improvement in individual subjects was probably greater. J. Pehrson pointed out the need to show progress toward meeting standard, not just the number of students who met all standards.

J. Pehrson asked where the data is shown for the high school achievement program. K. Guin responded that the high school program is new this year and therefore was not included in the annual report for last year. Kris Hildebrandt asked if the high school program was the first time OFE was following a cohort of students. Sid Sidorowicz responded that OFE has analyzed cohort groups when planning program improvements but has not done so for the Levy overall. J. Pehrson asked that OFE show data trends in the future and not just compare results with targets.

K. Guin presented a chart showing how the various Levy-funded programs performed with respect to their annual targets. Most programs have exceeded their targets significantly, but the targets and actual results have been getting more closely aligned. T. Burgess asked if the Levy should invest more in Health programs since these have shown the highest rate of achievement over targets. Holly Miller responded that OFE and the LOC have been getting better at setting targets, and it is not clear that Health programs have been outperforming other programs just because they exceeded targets at a higher rate. M. DeBell stated that these results raise questions about how to determine return on investment since it is difficult to determine causal relationships between programs and outcomes. H. Miller noted that math remains the challenge in improving outcomes, and a more coordinated approach is needed to support math skills. Wanda Brown stated there is a need to look for a more culturally appropriate pedagogy toward math.

K. Guin reviewed outcomes from the Early Learning programs. J. Pehrson noted the rate of children attaining standards is about equal in the Parent-Child Home Program and in the Early Learning Networks, but ELN costs are higher. Perhaps the Levy should invest more in PCHP and less in ELN. H. Miller responded that these are not necessarily comparative groups of children. Bea Kelleigh stated that standards are lower for PCHP children because of developmental differences related to age. M. DeBell noted another benefit of PCHP is that it engages parents in their child's education. K. Guin stated that some children in PCHP could do well as 2- and 3-year-olds but fall behind if they entered a poor quality preschool at age four.

D. Okimoto asked if research for the PCHP program followed youth through preschool and into elementary grades holding constant for the quality of the preschool. B. Kelleigh responded that some research of students on the east coast showed children who went from PCHP to preschool at age 4 did better in school than those who went from PCHP to elementary grades without preschool. J. Pehrson asked for the LOC to be briefed more about the relationship of Head Start, the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program, and Step Ahead.

W. Brown asked about the elements in the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS). Carla Bryant responded that ECERS includes some elements of adult child interactions as well as measures of the physical space of the classroom. She stated use of ECERS and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - 4 (PPVT-4) allows for a comparison of normed baseline data with the results of curriculum-embedded assessments. W. Brown asked if the results would be used to inform programs for professional development and C. Bryant concurred. W. Brown then asked if any tools were available to assess classrooms beyond preschool. C. Bryant stated that the State of Georgia was assessing classrooms into second grade.

D. Okimoto asked about embedded assessments. C. Bryant explained these are used to assess fidelity to a program model. H. Miller noted the assessments are used for classrooms and for determining a child's developmental progress. K. Guin added that children are evaluated using the assessments against benchmarks in various domains. C. Bryant explained how programs were using the assessment data to see how children are assigned to classrooms based on the child's skill level and teacher quality. She also further explained the child development domain assessment process.

T. Burgess asked about the results of teacher assessments. S. Sidorowicz responded most teachers did well, but the assessments are conducted by staff associated with the programs. PPVT-4 and ECERS will provide an independent assessment for external validation of embedded assessment results.

K. Guin reported on the Family Support Worker (FSW) and Family and Community Partnership program results. W. Brown stated the FSW African American male project started last year will be expanded to include Latino youth and will extend into the middle school grades.

Patricia Lee asked about the relationship of Limited English Proficiency and math failure. W. Brown responded the Guided Language Acquisition Design model used by Seattle Public Schools (SPS) focuses on skill building and not just on language adoption. M. DeBell stated SPS adopted Singapore math which is less language based but it is not yet fully integrated and used in classrooms.

K. Guin reported on the Elementary Community Learning Center (ECLC) results. J. Pehrson noted the program is small with a modest investment and the LOC should consider either going to a larger scale or eliminating the program altogether. H. Miller responded that the ECLCs have influenced other non-Levy-funded programs and have a greater impact than shown by the report.

K. Guin reviewed the Levy's middle school results. W. Brown noted some students at WASL level 1 are learning disabled and it is difficult to improve on their academic achievement. She also noted the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment pilot will be expanded to include more schools. Along with MAP, schools are adopting the Response To Intervention (RTI) system to address student social and emotional needs.

M. DeBell stated he hoped the LOC would look at the SPS strategic plan when making decisions for the next school year. H. Miller responded that Levy programs are fairly well aligned with the plan's overall goals, and OFE is waiting for SPS to adopt annual and school-based goals. D. Okimoto asked for more information about the plan and M. DeBell offered to update the LOC after the next quarterly report.

M. DeBell stated the Levy middle school investments raise questions about how to have a meaningful effect on classroom outcomes. J. Pehrson stated he does not see dramatic results from the innovation site investments. There have been significant course corrections but results are not clear. K. Guin responded this was the first full year of implementation of the new innovation site model. There should be better data at mid-year about the effect of new strategies adopted by these schools in the first semester of 2008-09.

J. Pehrson noted the size of the investment in these programs and said the LOC should determine if they are making a difference. D. Okimoto pointed out this issue is similar in many Levy-funded programs where there is a question about going to a larger scale either during this Levy period or in a new Levy. Any increased investment should be aligned with the SPS strategic plan. H. Miller noted planning for the next Levy begins soon.

T. Burgess closed with two observations about the annual report. First, while it is important to focus on effective programs, the LOC shouldn't lose the ability to see the bigger picture. Second, he is concerned that the academic achievement gap does not diminish at older grades.

The meeting was adjourned.