



DRAFT



City of Seattle

**FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY  
LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
Thursday, March 8, 2007 • 4:00–6:00 p.m.  
City Hall, Norman B. Rice Conference Room

## MINUTES

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Someireh Amirfaiz, Tim Ceis, Cheryl Chow, Frances Contreras David Della, Kris Hildebrandt, Antonio Hopson, Ruth Medsker for Raj Manhas, John Pehrson, Debra Sullivan

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Carla Bryant (Office for Education), Lin Carlson (Seattle Public Schools), Daisy Catague (Seattle Parks), Lori Chisholm (Parks), Jessica de Barros (OFE), Jerry DeGriek (HSD), Karl Fields (Parks), Michele Finnegan (Parks), Donnie Grabowski (OFE), Kathleen Groshong (HSD), Paula Houston (YMCA), Kathie Huus (Parks), Patricia Lee (Council Central Staff), Marilyn Littlejohn (OPM), Patricia McInturff (HSD), Holly Miller (OFE), Jennifer Moon (DOF), Erica Mullen (YMCA), Sue Rust (OFE), Sid Sidorowicz (OFE), Josh Sutton (YMCA), Lisa Taylor (SPS), Sally Telzrow (SPS), Anna Treadway (HSD), Viviana Ulloa (HSD), Margie Viall (HSD), Scott Washburn (YMCA), Christopher Williams (Parks), Billie Young (HSD)

Tim Ceis called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. The minutes from the February 13, 2007 meeting were approved.

T. Ceis reviewed the agenda and asked to move the Summer College 2007 Proposal ahead of Middle School Investments on the agenda in order to have time for discussion without interruption at the end of the meeting. There were no objections.

### **Summer College**

Holly Miller reviewed the proposal for Summer College 2007, including a description of the 2006 Summer College program, outcomes, feedback and the proposal for Summer College 2007. Major course corrections for 2007 include reducing the number of sites to two (North and South Seattle Community Colleges), earlier notification to parents and high school staff about the program, reduction of the total slots to 400, a written agreement among the parties and the addition of 75 tutoring slots for students who score Level I on one WASL test and Level II on another.

John Pehrson asked if the students who attended regularly had better outcomes. H. Miller said not necessarily. Some students retook the WASL successfully missed too many days to get credit for the WASL course,

Antonio Hopson asked if Seattle Central Community College had been dropped as a site forever, or could they potentially be a partner in the future. H. Miller said they could potentially be reinstated in the future, especially if they operated five days per week.

Cheryl Chow asked that percentages in the report be accompanied by numbers. H. Miller said that was a good suggestion.

Kristine Hildebrandt asked if Summer College was considered for funding during the 2004 Levy planning or added later. T. Ceis said Summer College was developed after the 2004 Levy was passed as an innovative approach to helping students pass the WASL. H. Miller said the program was a partnership with the School District and was partially funded with new State dollars to help students succeed with the WASL.

A. Hopson said he had high hopes for this program and asked how outreach would be done. H. Miller said OFE is working with SSD to do early notification for parents, high school counselors and the Pathway Deans at the high schools about the program since time is short to market the program after the WASL scores are released in mid-June.

Someireh Amirfaiz expressed concern that, at an enrollment capped at 400, Summer College might drop below the number of slots needed, especially because the need for math remediation is so great.

Debra Sullivan and S. Amirfaiz asked what would be different about recruitment from last year. H. Miller said earlier notification of parents and students along with better coordination with high school counselors and Pathway Deans was occurring, and staff was considering use of incentives for attendance and to encourage a higher WASL retake rate.

S. Amirfaiz and D. Sullivan suggested students be consulted to identify incentives that would really serve as motivational tools. They asked that OFE staff report back to the LOC on incentives selected.

S. Amirfaiz asked whether ESL classes were being offered to accommodate students with limited English. H. Miller said the current plan did not include ESL classes, but community colleges routinely offer ESL classes. She will inquire about whether those can be offered to Summer College parents and students.

A. Hopson said he was concerned about student self-selection for this program, which might result in certain groups of students not choosing to participate. H. Miller said she hoped those concerns would be somewhat addressed by working with the high school Pathway Deans who know students who need these services and could refer them to Summer College.

K. Hildebrandt asked how Summer College was aligned with Running Start and asked for demographic information about participants next year.

T. Ceis asked for and received a consensus to move forward with the 2007 Summer College program.

## **Middle School Investments**

T. Ceis said the last LOC meeting on middle school investments ended without clarifying the direction for middle school investments. The LOC agreed to review the programs to see if they should be redirected or modified in order to improve academic achievement. This meeting offers the LOC an opportunity to review and weigh in on the middle school programs.

H. Miller presented the Middle School options memorandum. Three major options were presented. Option A would retain the current model of investments but would require higher targets. It would also specify that Community Learning Centers (CLCs) would serve predominantly Level II students, and Middle School Support (MSSP) would serve Level I students. Higher participation rates for CLCs would be required.

Option B, entitled the School-Based Improvement Model, would invite a pool of six schools to write proposals for comprehensive academic services. The schools and their partners would compete for investments in up to four sites. Proposals would set one higher target for the whole school as opposed to separate targets for separate programs. Proposals would identify which strategies the school would use to help Level I and Level II students. More direct remedial approaches would be encouraged for Level I students. As with Option A, targets would be required to be much higher than current levels. Proposals could, but would not be required to, include current services of CLCs and MSSP.

A variant of Option B would be to invite all middle schools and K-8 schools and partners to write proposals for comprehensive academic services.

Option C, entitled Open Competition, would issue a Request for Investments (RFI) to help middle school students achieve academically. As with the other options, targets would have to be much higher than current levels. Public and private entities would be eligible to apply. The key selection criteria would be return on investment.

K. Hildebrandt noted that the adult-to-student ratio could impact the expense of programs and the return on investments.

John Pehrson asked if sites with multiple services, the Innovation Schools, are performing better. H. Miller said results are inconsistent. Sid Sidorowicz noted that students in both MSSP and CLCs are performing worse than students in either one or the other.

D. Sullivan said helping students improve, as in Option C, was a benefit, whether or not the student passed the WASL.

David Della asked if these options would require additional funding. T. Ceis said no.

S. Amirfaiz asked who provided MSSP services. Holly Miller said the School District provides MSSP services.

J. Pehrson said he was concerned about critical mass; that is, ensuring sufficient investment in any one site to achieve results. He said he also favored spending dollars to help schools and school districts improve, along with improvements in student academic achievement. He said the

advice of professional educators should be sought. While he supports WASL passage as the ultimate goal, J. Pehrson said we should be assessing progress along the way through intermediate milestones. Cheryl Chow said she agreed with J. Pehrson's last comment.

Ruth Medsker said attendance is a big predictor of WASL passage.

D. Sullivan asked what the real incentives are to get students to participate and take advantage of the programs. There is not enough evidence of improvement to make it worthwhile for students to participate. She said we need immediate outcomes and we need to invest in programs that will make an immediate difference.

A. Hopson said the use of the WASL as a target ignores other positive changes that are taking place for students. A. Hopson said he was looking for a positive slope. He understands starting out with low achievement, but successes are not very good compared to the resources the city is investing. D. Sullivan said other changes should be measured and promoted as successes.

R. Medsker said the data reflected results from only one year and only partial implementation during that year. Students fall back between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. Seattle students fell back less than students statewide.

A. Hopson said the successes don't look good compared to other Districts, especially when one considers the amount of funding support in Seattle.

R. Medsker said the middle schools are making many course corrections and program improvements and they are seeing progress on student measures.

Tim Ceis asked how the LOC will invest more in the successful programs that work. Option B for competitive proposals is intended to get schools to propose how to replicate success.

R. Medsker said principals and teachers learn most when they collaborate and learn from each other. She liked the idea of an expert review panel where all principals could listen to each other's proposals and the feedback to them. She did not like the idea of competition among schools.

D. Della said the City Council is concerned about closing the achievement gap. How do we use finite resources to help students who are behind and the struggling schools they attend? The City should align with Carla Santorno's plan and work in partnership with the SSD.

C. Chow said she was leaning toward Option B.1. She said the LOC should consider some of the comments made about the WASL. The LOC should not tie all success to the WASL; she considered it a disservice to kids.

D. Sullivan said the LOC should think about replicating practices at successful schools because we need more successes. What can be done to make successes happen more?

John Pehrson cited the School Turnaround program at Madrona K-8 as an example of a successful program.

R. Medsker said she was nervous about focusing on Level I students and having WASL passage as the standard.

Frances Contreras said Option B.1. appeared most targeted and concentrated. She suggested adding a requirement that schools work with community partners.

R. Medsker said she wanted to continue Linkage school funding.

D. Della asked if we were retaining the original emphasis on southeast and southwest Seattle. H. Miller said yes, the six schools would be from southeast, southwest and the central area.

J. Pehrson suggested Option A for the remaining schools and suggested inviting four schools to make proposals, not to compete.

K. Hildebrandt agreed it would be better to set up a process for a dialogue, not competition, with the schools.

A. Hopson asked what is wrong with retaining our original plan and increasing targets. He said he would like to be more educated about what the principals value.

R. Medsker said she would like to stay with the current four sites. Better planning will drive better differentiation. She also stressed that the process needed to move quickly.

T. Ceis said it not the intention to take a long time in the process, but there is value in bringing in outside experts.

S. Amirfaiz said there is a persistent achievement gap and something needs to be done differently. What is going on within families? The expert panel needs to understand the needs of immigrants, refugees and the poor. J. Pehrson said the Family Involvement program should address these concerns.

Tim Ceis said a decision needed to be made.

D. Sullivan said she did not favor Option A. She would like to see written proposals with effective strategies and the ability to carry them out. She recommended working with the existing four innovation sites to make improvements and to require community partnerships.

A. Hopson said he also favored Option B, but without competition. He wanted to work with principals to improve current efforts.

T. Ceis said we need to move quickly to assure schools about their funding for next year. Option B. 1. does not upset the status quo too much but does allow for substantial improvement over current practice. We will proceed to implement Option B.1. and aim to complete the review by April or early May.