



DRAFT



City of Seattle

FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY
Tuesday, April 22, 2008 • 4:00-5:30 p.m.
LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
7th Floor, City Hall

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Burgess, Tim Ceis, Cheryl Chow, Frances Contreras, Kris Hildebrandt, David Okimoto, John Pehrson, Carla Santorno

OTHERS PRESENT: Eric Anderson (Human Services Dept), Lin Carlson (Seattle Public Schools), TJ Cosgrove (Health), Betsy Graef (Council Staff), Sonja Griffin (HSD), Kathleen Groshong (Human Services Dept), Kacey Guin (Office for Education), Bea Kelleigh, (Human Services Dept), Lauren Lee (HSD), Patricia Lee (Council Staff), Holly Miller (OFE), Alan Painter (HSD), Sue Rust (OFE), Anne Shields (Health), Sid Sidorowicz (OFE)

Tim Burgess called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. The minutes of the March 11, 2008 meeting of the Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) were approved.

Families and Education Levy Mid-Year Report 2007-2008

Holly Miller introduced the Families and Education Levy Mid-Year Report by reminding the LOC of the sequence of reporting annually. The Levy Annual Report is issued in January following late November receipt of WASL data. The Annual Report reports on the previous school year's results. The Mid-Year Report provides baseline data on the students Levy programs are serving in the current school year and reports on first semester indicator results. Taken together, these two reports help provide direction on course corrections and targets for the next school year. H. Miller noted that the LOC has already made substantial course corrections including direction of the Family Support Worker Program, the Middle School Support Program and the 9th Grade Academic Achievement Program. She noted that significant changes in Early Learning programs would also be forthcoming as the City seeks to blend funding towards a more comprehensive preschool program for 4-year-olds. At its May 13th meeting, the LOC will receive recommendations for the next school year's academic targets.

Early Learning

Kacey Guin presented the Levy Mid-Year Report beginning with Early Learning. Tim Burgess asked if there would eventually be one kindergarten readiness assessment or would there always be multiple assessments. Sonja Griffin said there would probably always be multiple assessments because they measure different areas and there is no one assessment developed yet that measures all domains. H. Miller said the City had learned many other jurisdictions are struggling with this question when they made site visits to New Jersey, Florida and San Francisco.

David Okimoto asked about the timeline for implementation of the kindergarten readiness assessments. S. Griffin said the assessments would be tested in pilots this May.

John Pehrson asked if the Seattle School District (SSD) would be using the tool. S. Griffin said the District was participating in the process to select assessment tools, but it was not known if they would use the assessments. J. Pehrson asked if the State was doing anything to produce a kindergarten readiness assessment. S. Griffin said they were not although Thrive by Five was also participating in the selection process. Bea Kelleigh said the State was interested in Seattle's progress. She noted that discussion about K – 12 assessment had been ongoing for years and focus on early learning assessment was relatively recent.

T. Burgess asked if students who are not school ready show a pattern in lack of preparation. H. Miller said we will know more this May after the assessment pilot. This will be very valuable information which will be conveyed to the Seattle School District, especially to the Family Support Workers so they can be prepared as children transition into kindergarten.

K. Guin pointed out that when New Jersey learned that students were entering kindergarten already behind in math skills, they used that information to strengthen the pre-kindergarten math curriculum.

J. Pehrson asked for a definition of “match” children. K. Guin said match children could be ECEAP or private-pay students in the same programs as Step Ahead children whose teachers and classrooms benefited from professional development and other Step Ahead resources.

J. Pehrson said he was concerned with language used to talk about school readiness, for example, “those who score lower are likely to be less ready.” K. Guin said the language is imprecise. S. Griffin said assessments are used throughout the year to adjust approaches to instruction and to guide coaching and professional development of teachers.

Kris Hildebrandt said we do not now have any readiness data from the District and asked if we would in the future. H. Miller said SPS states as one of their academic milestones that children will enter kindergarten ready for school and they have indicated a desire to have a readiness assessment.

Family Support

T. Burgess asked if funding cuts by the Federal government for Family Support Workers (FSWs) would be replaced with other funding. K. Guin said she was not aware of funding to replace the lost funding for the FSWs. C. Santorno said six FTE would be cut and eleven FSW positions were not being filled. K. Guin noted that final Medicaid funding decisions have not been made by the Federal government.

Elementary Community Learning Centers

T. Burgess asked how many students come from non-English-speaking families. K. Guin pointed out that those students are represented in graphs in the Mid-Year Report in the “limited English proficiency” and “equal English proficiency” categories.

Middle School Programs

John Pehrson noted that the Student Learning Plan data supports the target of 50% of WASL Level 1 students moving to Level 2 in math.

C. Santorno said the middle schools are piloting a variety of assessment tools prior to District-wide adoption.

Frances Contreras asked why participation in extended-day activities was less than anticipated. K. Guin stated that attendance differs by site and is influenced by the lack of ability to make attendance mandatory, transportation issues and varying incentives. H. Miller asked whether attendance will be mandatory next year for the extended-day programs funded by the Southeast Initiative. C. Santorno replied that would be the case at Aki.

9th Grade Academic Achievement Program

T. Burgess asked why Franklin, West Seattle and Sealth High Schools were chosen to participate in the 9th Grade Program. K. Guin said Rainier Beach and Cleveland High Schools have significant funding in the works from the Southeast Initiative. These three schools also enroll the most students from the four innovation middle schools and they represent the high schools with the greatest number of students with risk factors.

D. Okimoto asked if these schools have more students at risk than Rainier Beach or Cleveland High School. K. Guin said they have more students at risk, but not a greater percentage of the entire student body. Enrollment at Cleveland and Rainier Beach High Schools is low.

J. Pehrson asked if the plans are being developed. C. Santorno said they were and the planning and target-setting process has been very collaborative.

H. Miller said District and School staff had met together for a full-day planning retreat in the past week.

J. Pehrson asked if the City would continue to fund the Seattle Team for Youth program. T. Ceis said that is yet to be determined. Program design options are being developed now with more of a focus on gang prevention.

F. Contreras asked if the English Language Learner audit has been completed. C. Santorno said no. F. Contreras said data from that audit would help in developing targets. C. Santorno said the audit should be available July 1, 2008.

C. Santorno said the School district wants to be involved in target development. She said in particular the District wants to make sure there are meaningful indicators besides the WASL for Family Support Workers.

J. Pehrson said the Mid-Year Report data points to the need for course corrections in some programs. For example, in the middle school programs, attendance is low and the programs are under-utilized. Perhaps students should be identified earlier.

T. Burgess said we need to think creatively about how to improve participation.

C. Santorno said the District is creating an Office of Prevention and Intervention. Resources are the key. The district needs to have the ability to make home visits. There are complex reasons for attendance issues which require individual attention.

D. Okimoto asked what is contributing to absences in the elementary grades. C. Santorno said that is not clear although it includes busy families, illness and lack of understanding about the importance of regular attendance.

Sid Sidorowicz pointed out that children who attend the Elementary Community Learning Centers have better attendance. K. Guin pointed out that the Elementary CLC programs have strong alignment with Family Support Workers and connect with families better.

Lin Carlson said attendance is a critical issue and should be more prevalent as an indicator.

J. Pehrson said the Levy is near its midpoint and we should consider a mid-term review of the Levy to prepare for the next renewal.

H. Miller agreed and suggested a timeframe after the next Levy Annual Report in spring 2009. K. Hildebrandt suggested we look at data longitudinally at that time.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.