



DRAFT



City of Seattle

**FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY  
LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
Tuesday, May 15, 2007 • 4:00–5:30 p.m.  
City Hall, Norman B. Rice Conference Room

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cheryl Chow, Frances Contreras, David Della, Kris Hildebrandt, Antonio Hopson, Marie Kurose, Michelle Corker-Curry for Raj Manhas, David Okimoto, John Pehrson, Mary Jean Ryan for Tim Ceis, Debra Sullivan

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Eric Anderson (HSD), Linwood Carlson (Seattle Public Schools), Lori Chisholm (Parks), Kevin Corrigan (SPS), Jessica de Barros (Office For Education), Jerry DeGriek (HSD), Karl Fields (Parks), Bob Fortner (Youth Tutoring Program), Donnie Grabowski (OFE), Sonja Griffin (HSD), Kathleen Groshong (HSD), Mary Johnson (HSD), Lauren Lee (HSD), Patricia Lee (Council Central Staff), Patricia McInturff (HSD), Holly Miller (OFE), Gloria Mitchell (SPS), Erica Mullen (YMCA), Janet Preston (SPS), Sue Rust (OFE), Anne Shields (Health), Sid Sidorowicz (OFE), Linda Rose Slater (SPS), Tilman Smith (HSD), Mao Svy (HSD), Lisa Taylor (SPS), C. Viviana Ulloa (HSD), Meenoo Yashar (Child Care Resources), Billie Young (HSD)

David Della called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. The minutes of the April 17, 2007 Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) were approved.

**English Language Learners (ELLs)**

The LOC agreed to postpone the English Language Learners discussion until all LOC members were present or at a separate meeting of interested LOC members.

Mary Jean Ryan noted that ELL issues are being discussed nationally and statewide. Assessments and accountability are the key issues. The State Board of Education asked the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to create an ELL action plan over the next several months. The Legislature is interested in the ELL issue and included \$1.3 million in the State budget to fund development and evaluation of projects that demonstrate “best instructional practices.” MJ Ryan suggested the Seattle Public Schools may want to consider applying for the demonstration funding. MJ Ryan has recommended that Michelle Corker-Curry be invited to join the OSPI ELL Advisory Board.

Debra Sullivan joined the meeting and agreed also to postpone the ELL discussion.

**Levy Course-Corrections and 2007–2008 School Year Targets**

Holly Miller set the context for the presentation. At the April meeting, the LOC reviewed Baseline Data for students currently being served by Levy programs. The LOC also reviewed first semester (2006–2007) indicator data and previewed and suggested some course-corrections for next school year. Most LOC members attended detailed briefings prior to the April meeting.

H. Miller said OFE will present recommended course-corrections and targets for next year at this LOC meeting. These were based on progress to date and on LOC recommendations.

H. Miller noted that the Levy Teams, LOC and OFE have built a data system to track accountability over the last two years. It is now possible to know much more about how students are performing and to change course and adjust targets based on real data. She said Levy teams had done a good job of using data in planning for next year, and she recognized and appreciated their hard work. H. Miller said OFE would make a short presentation but reserve most of the time on the agenda for LOC discussion.

Sid Sidorowicz noted that the LOC had received a new set of slides that corrected some errors in calculation and over-reporting.

David Della noted for the record that the LOC had been joined by Debra Sullivan and Frances Contreras. D. Della said the LOC should ask questions and offer suggestions section by section as the report proceeded.

Jessica de Barros said the LOC's request for data disaggregated by race, eligibility and income was included in the full Levy mid-year report.

Next, J. de Barros presented indicator data, recommended course-corrections and recommended targets for 2007-08 for each investment area.

## **Early Learning**

Antonio Hopson asked for examples of business rules. J. de Barros cited common rules for attendance and standardizing the number of program days for Step Ahead preschool sites and elementary community learning centers as examples.

John Pehrson asked if financial incentives for performance, including attendance, are still included. J. de Barros said average performance pay is 25% of a given contract.

David Okimoto asked for an explanation of the early learning "embedded assessment." J. de Barros explained that curriculum-embedded assessments are child assessments that accompany the curriculum in use. For example, both Creative Curriculum and High/Scope have curriculum-embedded assessments administered by teachers three times per year to track student progress. Billie Young added that assessments determine where children are developmentally by looking at 50 different items in four domains. Student achievement at levels 3 or 4 indicates readiness for kindergarten.

F. Contreras asked if teachers were involved in developing the assessments.

H. Miller clarified that assessments are designed by the curriculum programs and are not typically changed to retain reliability and validity of the assessment.

J. Pehrson asked if it should be an objective to get a kindergarten readiness assessment tool agreed to by both the City and SPS. There was general agreement that it would be ideal to have both the City and SPS using the same tool.

Marie Kurose asked if SPS was developing a kindergarten readiness assessment. H. Miller said SPS was trying to select a school readiness assessment but Levy preschool programs would continue to use curriculum embedded assessments until agreement was reached on the SPS kindergarten readiness assessment.

Michelle Corker-Curry said SPS was looking for an assessment that could be used in multiple languages, that was affordable for SPS to use and that teachers agreed to administer.

M. Kurose asked who administered the embedded assessments. Sonja Griffin said teachers administered the assessments in fall, winter and spring. An external team was hired to administer the DIAL-3.

J. de Barros noted that the highest-performing classrooms accessed professional development resources most often. The mid-year report recommended redistributing funding for professional development to the lowest-performing sites.

A. Hopson asked if funding for professional development was concentrated in certain neighborhoods. J. de Barros said professional development was funded by the Levy and was therefore concentrated in southeast and southwest Seattle.

D. Sullivan asked how professional development related to the recommendations of the coaches. J. de Barros said that was part of the issue: coaches may recommend professional development to programs, but follow-up by sites and/or teachers is voluntary.

A. Hopson asked if release time was provided for professional development. S. Griffin said contracts include five hours release time each week. She is looking at innovative ways to bring coursework to the sites to make professional development more accessible.

D. Sullivan asked if there was a reason why professional development is not always required. S. Griffin said Early Learning is moving towards requiring professional development, especially at low-performing sites. D. Sullivan said professional development should be an across-the-board requirement if sites receive ELN funding. J. de Barros said a course-correction for next year is to establish 5-year professional development plan that lays out specific requirements for training and describes what is required for low-performing sites.

A. Hopson asked if some programs that are not performing as well were located in “hard to serve” areas. S. Griffin said the Step Ahead pre-school programs are serving those most in need.

A. Hopson said there probably wasn't a “one size fits all” solution for professional development. He was interested in learning more about the barriers and issues facing the Step Ahead programs. S. Griffin said she would be happy to report back to the LOC on the barriers and issues facing the Step Ahead programs.

H. Miller said a briefing on the five-year professional development plan might provide a good structure for the discussion because it will lay out a process by which professional development will address the needs of individual programs and teachers.

In response to the recommended 2007-08 early learning target of 85% of preschool children meeting the kindergarten readiness assessment, D. Sullivan asked what will happen to the 15% of students who do not meet standard. J. de Barros said those students will be referred to Family Support Workers (FSWs) and Elementary Community Learning Center staff for monitoring and follow-up. S. Griffin said individual service plans are drawn up for struggling students and are given to the FSWs.

## **Family Support/Family Involvement**

D. Della asked why the target for 2007-08 is lower than the 2005-06 actuals. J. de Barros said the targets for 2005-06 were not value-added; all targets beginning with 2006-07 are value-added. Only students who have not passed the WASL or the Direct Reading Assessment count towards achieving the target. Last year, the value-added approach was not used.

M. Corker-Curry asked if the targets are for English-speaking students only. J. de Barros said the targets are for all students.

M. Kurose noted that 1500 focus students will be served with a target of 275 passing the WASL. She asked if the target was value-added. J. de Barros said yes.

J. Pehrson recommended that OFE show the academic results for all students who use Levy programs and highlight those who are value-added. This would provide a more accurate picture of what the Levy is achieving.

## **Elementary CLCs (ECLCs)**

Kris Hildebrandt asked whether anyone had looked at why students were not participating at higher rates. Was it due to other family obligations? J. de Barros said one site had started late and had not been successful at attracting families long-term. A course-correction for the next school year will increase the number of contracted days at each site and will move the start time up by one week into September.

Kathleen Groshong said she is working with sites to emphasize the need for early enrollment. Some schools are identifying students for next year's ECLCs now.

D. Sullivan asked whether a student who started on the first day and attended 75% of the time counted more than a student who started halfway and attended 100% of the time. S. Sidorowicz said the goal is high attendance per month and over time.

A. Hopson asked if attendance patterns were related to the quality of the school building. K. Groshong said some issues do exist around access to buildings and transportation, but not necessarily the quality of the building.

D. Della asked what happens to students who enter middle school several years behind. H. Miller said that would be discussed in the Middle School presentation.

MJ Ryan said a similar question could be asked about the transition from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten. She asked if there was a good handoff system in place going into middle school. M. Corker-Curry said elementary and middle school teams discuss struggling students together so middle schools can develop strategies for helping them to improve academically.

J. Pehrson asked if the ECLCs had adopted a goal for improving student WASL performance even for those students who do not pass all three tests. J. de Barros explained that most of the programs had adopted goals for the number of students improving WASL levels.

## **Middle School Programs**

J. de Barros said the innovation sites had presented their revised proposals which will be presented to the LOC at the June meeting. Ruth Medsker also asked the Linkage sites to write plans.

M. Corker-Curry said the School District is moving to a clearer middle school math strategy.

D. Della said he was glad we were looking at school-wide targets. He asked if we can drill down to look at individuals.

H. Miller said individual student learning plans were prepared for all students who did not pass the WASL. While those have been somewhat formulaic in the past, schools are getting much more skillful and targeted in diagnosing problems and in applying appropriate interventions.

M. Kurose asked if the SPS has a district-wide professional development strategy. M. Corker-Curry said yes.

A. Hopson asked if SPS was considering lowering class size or hiring more competent math teachers. M. Corker-Curry said SPS is competing with districts across the nation for competent math teachers. She said the District uses a variety of strategies, including student pull-outs and adding more teachers to classrooms to increase attention to individual students.

Cheryl Chow said there are lots of well-meaning people who are good at math and science but cannot connect with kids. The bottom line is that there are few people who want to and can teach math for the wages offered.

J. Pehrson urged all to take advantage of lessons learned from MESA.

### **Seattle Team for Youth (STFY)**

M. Kurose asked whether attendance problems caused by disciplinary actions were tracked. J. de Barros said days missed do include suspension days. S. Sidorowicz said it is not possible to break out or differentiate days missed because of disciplinary actions. M. Kurose asked if there is a correlation between students with attendance problems and discipline problems. J. de Barros said there is a correlation between attendance and discipline problems.

A. Hopson urged that not too much attention should be given to attendance. He got the sense from STFY that staff were working hard to have positive effects on young adults. He said poor attendance should not affect performance pay. J. de Barros said there were no recommendations to cut funding. She said part of OFE's job is to look at indicator data and research shows attendance is a key indicator of dropping out.

Eric Anderson recommended looking at attendance 3-6 months prior to STFY intervention and then looking at it again after a few months in STFY. He said attendance is important and participation in STFY should yield improvements. He cautioned that some students change schools several times before they find a good fit.

D. Sullivan said if low attendance is an indicator for dropping out, what is the reason for low attendance? We need to know more about why students are not attending school. Maybe school needs to be more interesting. H. Miller said new research points to critical periods for interventions with students at risk of dropping out of school.

D. Della asked what STFY does about students who have dropped out and are not part of the system. J. de Barros said part of the target is to re-enroll students who have dropped out. The recommended target for next year is 300. E. Anderson said 107 students re-enrolled and have stayed in school 90 days during the first semester. M. Corker-Curry said SPS has a "pathway" dean of students at every high school that intervenes with struggling students.

## **Student Health**

M. Corker-Curry expressed concern about the 12/31/07 deadline for screening students by school nurses. J. de Barros said the deadline was recommended by the Seattle/King County Public Health Department because later referrals would be counterproductive for meaningful interventions.

Anne Shields said school health clinics need better connections to educators who can help in identifying students in need of school health support. If an effective linkage with educators can be found, there would be less work for school nurses in screening students.

M. Corker-Curry said she agreed but did not want to impose an unrealistic deadline for Seattle School District nurses. Jerry DeGrieck said student health screenings should occur as early as possible in the school year.

Kris Hildebrandt asked for more information about the HPV campaign. A. Shields said the costs of vaccine are covered by the State Health Department. Proposed Levy funding would cover the costs of a coordinating nurse for one year.

D. Della said there will be time on the agenda of the next LOC meeting to address additional questions. He then asked about adding a graduation outcome for Health Centers. J. de Barros explained that few of the high school students take the WASL tests after 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and graduation was added as an outcome for the 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

J. Pehrson suggested starting the next presentation with Health and proceeding in reverse order.

K. Hildebrandt said if the new middle school model works, the LOC should consider applying the approach to high schools.

M. Kurose said expecting school health clinics to impact academic achievement requires a large leap in practice. She recommended that additional indicators, such as attendance, be reported. This indicator is included in the mid-year report.

C. Chow said middle schools have been fortunate to work with other foundations allowing FEL investments to be leveraged. She recommended getting more school input in target setting rather than assigning targets. She said collaboration would result in more school ownership and give and take.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.