



DRAFT



City of Seattle

FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY
Tuesday, September 16, 2008 • 4:00-5:30 p.m.
LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
7th Floor, City Hall

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Burgess, Frances Contreras, Marie Kurose, David Okimoto, John Pehrson, Carla Santorno, Michael DeBell for Cheryl Chow

OTHERS PRESENT: Kacey Guin (OFE), Carla Bryant (OFE), Erica Mullen (YMCA), Laura Garcia (SPS), Lin Carlson (SPS), TJ Cosgrove (PHSKC), Jerry DeGriek (HSD), Becky Guerra (DOF), Alan Painter (HSD), Eric Anderson (HSD), Peter Harris (Legislative) Patricia Lee (Legislative), Margie Viall (HSD), Kathleen Groshong (HSD), Sid Sidorowicz (OFE), Holly Miller (OFE), Donnie Grabowski (OFE), Sonja Griffin (HSD), Bea Kelleigh (HSD)

Tim Burgess called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. The minutes of the May 13, 2008 meeting of the Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) were approved, with one revision. Carla Santorno requested that word “standards” be replaced with “metrics” as the first word in the next to last sentence on Page One. The final minutes will reflect this change.

2004 Families and Education Levy Budget Briefing

Donnie Grabowski gave an update on the budget. The briefing covered planned vs. actual revenues and expenditures, Levy underspend, and highlights of the 2009 Proposed Budget. John Pehrson asked why the investment earnings are different from original projections, and whether expending these earnings has an effect on future Levy budgets. D. Grabowski noted that actual Levy spending has been slower than originally anticipated, leaving larger fund balances and therefore higher interest earnings. Using these funds should have no negative effect on future budgets.

T. Burgess inquired about the 1½% inflation rate. D. Grabowski answered that the 1½% inflation factor was set by Council staff when the Levy ordinance was planned. Frances Contreras asked whether the 1½% inflation rate is standard across all programs. Holly Miller answered that yes, all programs received the same 1½% rate.

David Okimoto asked about the expiration of the Levy. Sid Sidorowicz said that the Levy collection will end in 2011 but that the money collected will be used through the end of the 2011-12 school year. The Levy will be up for renewal in 2011. If passed, collection for the new Levy will start in 2012.

T. Burgess asked why the crossing guard program expenditures have been so low and why the program ends after 2008. H. Miller stated that there are always fewer persons hired as crossing guards than funds allow. J. Pehrson added that the program was added by the City Council, after the Levy planning process, and that funding the program was

provided for only three-and-a-half years. T. Burgess asked whether the Mayor's budget funds crossing guards in 2009 and 2010. H. Miller responded yes.

J. Pehrson asked how the crossing guards were being funded. D. Grabowski stated that funds came from Levy savings, plus excess revenue. Excess interest earnings account for \$648,000 and savings provide \$352,000.

F. Contreras asked if the administration and evaluation funding is used for monitoring and testing students. H. Miller responded that these funds are used for OFE and the data system used to report on Levy outcomes.

D. Okimoto asked whether the LOC was required to take action on the budget. H. Miller answered that the LOC could advise the Mayor on their agreement (or disagreement) with the crossing guard funding and the transfer of some Out-of-School Time (OST) funding to Middle School Support Program (MSSP), as recommended by the LOC in 2007.

J. Pehrson questioned the funding of the crossing guards, saying they were not an academic program. Using Levy funds was intended to be a short-term solution until alternatives were adopted. No alternatives have been presented that he is aware of. Patricia Lee responded that the City Council has reviewed alternatives, and none of them have been deemed acceptable. No alternative funding is available. F. Contreras said the crossing guards are a public safety issue and should be included as a line item in the district's or city's budget. This is how these programs are typically funded nationally.

H. Miller added that this has been a difficult issue, but the proposed budget offers the program some stability. J. Pehrson responded that he will be reluctant to continue funding the program though the Levy in future years.

J. Pehrson moved that the budget recommendations submitted by OFE be approved. D. Okimoto seconded and all members approved.

M. Kurose said it would be good to look at the budget and outcomes at the same time. H. Miller answered that discussions about outcomes take place in the spring when the LOC reviews the mid-year report and makes recommendations on course corrections and increased targets for programs.

Proposed Changes for Early Learning Program for 2008-09 School Year

H. Miller introduced this discussion by noting that the City is moving toward blending funds used for Early Learning and to improve quality. Programs are generally established by funding streams and the City would like expand the reach of our programs to more children by better leveraging funds.

Bea Kelleigh and Sonja Griffin, both from HSD, provided an overview of the proposed programmatic and budget changes to the Early Learning program for the 08-09 SY. D. Okimoto asked about the Levy serving fewer students than called for in the original plan. S. Griffin answered that the number of Step Ahead Pre-K slots will be reduced, but overall the services provided through the professional development institutes will reach more children, via their teachers.

D. Okimoto asked why the Levy would be giving money to Head Start programs, given their already high level of funding, and inquired how much money ECEAP and Head Start would be receiving from the Levy. S. Griffin said that the idea of joint professional development is to raise the quality for all students. This model results in all programs using the same assessments and providing uniform data for analysis. Overall, ECEAP will receive \$100,000 extra in Levy funding. The actual amount of funding for Head Start is less clear.

Carla Bryant explained that the professional development model began two years ago, based on the idea that Pre-K providers could pool their professional development resources to provide stronger and more comprehensive training for everyone. For example, Head Start often focuses on social services, and not necessarily professional development for their teachers. Last year, \$30,000 was spent on professional development institutes that benefited a variety of teachers. These were pooled funds. C. Bryant stated that through Step Ahead, ECEAP, and Head Start working together, you get economies of scale in training, and create a cohort of teachers who work toward post-secondary education goals. S. Griffin assured that the Levy was not providing funding directly to Head Start, but was investing professional development dollars into a broader pool of funds to provide better training. Other strategies undertaken to improve professional development include providing a website that allows networking for Early Learning providers and the adoption of a common assessment to measure classroom quality.

F. Contreras asked if there was a push to include 3-year-olds in Pre-K services. She said that two years is critical for getting kids ready for school. S. Griffin stated that Head Start and ECEAP are currently serving 3-year-olds and will be assessing these children and submitting their data. This will allow for the analysis of outcomes based on one versus two years of preschool.

Michael DeBell inquired about the unmet need and asked how many children aren't being served. B. Kelleigh responded that there are about 2,500 children likely to be candidates for these services (4-years-old and low-to-moderate income) and about 1,400 will be served by the proposed model.

S. Griffin asked if the proposed changes need to be voted on. T. Burgess said they did not.

Youth Violence Prevention Initiative Briefing

Marilyn Littlejohn from the Office of Policy and Management, and Doug Carey from the Department of Finance, presented the new Mayor's Youth Violence Prevention Initiative.

F. Contreras asked if this initiative will serve homeless youth. M. Littlejohn stated that homelessness was not an eligibility criterion in and of itself. M. Kurose asked if this work was connected to Reinvesting in Youth (RIY). M. Littlejohn said they used best practices from RIY to inform their work in connection with juvenile court. S. Sidorowicz said the goal was to look at gaps in services for these youth, and that youth in the court system were already receiving services expanded by RIY.

M. Kurose asked about partnerships with schools, particularly in regard to disciplinary procedures. M. Littlejohn said they were examining peer mediation programs, as well as alternatives to suspension.

D. Okimoto asked, if the primary focus is on students with disciplinary actions in the middle schools, are they the ones committing crimes? He is concerned that the initiative might not be able to achieve its outcome target if the focus is on these kids. He asked about the work that was being done around gang activity and inquired about the role of the police department. D. Carey said that resources within the gang unit were being beefed up and that gang unit officers were rotated within the precincts every 60 days to spread expertise across the precincts. In addition, officers would be located in four middle schools. T. Burgess added that arresting offenders was also one element of the city's response.

C. Santorno said that the district had recently designed a safety net program to serve at-risk kids that was also utilizing a hub model. This model is largely focused on high school students, so the city's focus on middle school students would provide a nice complement.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55.