



DRAFT



City of Seattle

**FAMILIES AND EDUCATION
LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Tuesday, September 8, 2015**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Washington, Saadia Hamid, Hueiling Chan, Allison Wood, Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis, Ruth Kagi, Marty McLaren, Charles Knutson, Elise Chayet.

OTHERS PRESENT: Holly Miller (DEEL), Donnie Grabowski (DEEL), Sid Sidorowicz (DEEL), Monica Liang-Aguirre (DEEL), Michael Stone (SPS), Brian Goodnight (Council Central Staff), Christy Leonard (DEEL).

Holly Miller called the meeting to order. H. Miller apologized to the group while informing them that Councilmember Tim Burgess would be unable to attend tonight's meeting. Introductions were made and H. Miller introduced Allison Wood and Ruth Kagi as new members of the Levy Oversight Committee.

H. Miller asked the group if there were any changes to the August 11 LOC draft minutes. No changes were requested and the minutes were approved. H. Miller reviewed the agenda which included the Department of Education and Early Learning Budget Overview and the Seattle Preschool Program Enrollment Update.

Department of Education and Early Learning Budget Overview

Donnie Grabowski presented the Department of Education and Early Learning Budget Overview.

Kevin Washington stated that prior to the combining of the programs, there were separate budgets for each of the organizations. Is the combined budget that we are looking at with the programs added together vastly different from the separate budgets we were looking at and is the plan to continue running the programs for the next fiscal year? D. Grabowski replied that the substantial change this year was the addition of the Seattle Preschool Program and that as a new department DEEL is still experiencing growing pains. Management has become aware that we may be a little short-staffed and we are currently looking closer at staffing issues related to Human Resources and Information Technology, which are currently being out-sourced to other city departments.

H. Miller replied that in the organization chart the director's office has the biggest budget which includes the director's office staff and K-12 levy staff. Eventually our plan is to have K-12 staff become a separate division. The budget office did not want to add a lot of administrative staff in the first year so we are being conservative in the management of these

levies. We are constrained by financial plans we put together when these levies were created which includes a 4% administrative cap by the ordinance. H. Miller confirmed that the Seattle Youth Violence and Prevention Initiative (SYVPI) is moving to the Human Services Department effective January 2016.

Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis asked if we had more information in regards to the reason for investment earnings shortfall. D. Grabowski replied that it is a city-managed fund which is managed conservatively. Charles Knutson asked how long DEEL intends to hold onto the FEL \$1.5 million contingency fund and if there is a point in time when the money is used or if it is solely for a rainy day. D. Grabowski replied that in the first three years of the FEL Levy, the City under-collected property tax and investment earning revenue and need to make sure that we don't spend any of the contingency fund until we know how much revenue is collected for the remaining years of the levy (2015-18). She added that there is no money left from the 2004 levy. K. Washington asked about our comfort level with revenue sources for the Seattle Preschool Program. H. Miller replied that in terms of tuition we are still enrolling kids and that we will be analyzing revenue sources.

Ruth Kagi stated that the State just passed a whole new system that has a lot of revenue going to child-care providers based on levels of quality and asked if DEEL has built this into their system. D. Grabowski replied that DEEL has developed a provider payment calculator that determines payments based on teacher qualifications, other student funding sources (ECEAP, Head Start, Step Ahead), and number of students per classroom. S. Sidorowicz replied that this is in regards to the blending of funding sources and an example of this is when DEEL collects enrollment information we see the distribution of children who qualify for ECEAP in the city, identify who they are and where the slots are. The provider will primarily know that they have a blend of children in their program that they are getting reimbursed for, however the provider will not know who is an ECEAP child. Ideally we blend the money behind the scenes and pay providers by classroom.

L. Gaskill-Gaddis stated that if you have a classroom of kids based on various criteria, some kids are part of the Seattle Preschool Program and some aren't, with some bringing in other resources. Is there a standard rate? S. Sidorowicz replied that all kids will be part of the Seattle Preschool Program and that there is a standard rate that is adjusted based on unique program requirements. L. Gaskill-Gaddis asked if a classroom has children from multiple programs such as Step Ahead, ECEAP and private pay, will the reimbursement be different for each one based on their particular criteria? H. Miller replied that they will all be treated the same and added that we hope to develop a common set of standards so that blending of funding will be much easier. H. Miller stated that she believes that there is movement at the federal level to create more flexibility with funding.

Saadia Hamid asked who the professional development funds will be administered by. H. Miller replied that it would be administered by the city and that we have centralized professional development to ensure high quality. E. Chayet asked if we have any sense of the impact that "Best Starts for Kids" might have. H. Miller replied that the county is facing challenges with all the jurisdictions. There was an attempt, but they didn't feel like they could reach an agreement with Seattle. The focus will be birth to three. M. McLaren asked if Head Start has always had six-hour programs. H. Miller replied that both ECEAP and Step Ahead

have also not had six-hour programs and part of the complexity is figuring out how to allocate the revenue. We will work with Head start to figure out how to supplement their budgets.

Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) Update

Sid Sidorowicz presented the Seattle Preschool Program Enrollment Update.

K. Washington asked how the chart of household income levels compared to what was initially expected. DEEL did a combination of eligibility factors around the kids, one of which was household income. How did the reality work out compared to what you were thinking? S. Sidorowicz replied that for new applicants the percentage of what the parents have to pay in tuition is lower than what DEEL initially estimated. We are currently in the process of gathering information for families who were pre-enrolled and in November will provide more information on how the revenue paid out.

R. Kagi stated that you mentioned having four times as many applications as slots, what is the criteria for prioritizing who gets these slots? S. Sidorowicz replied that you must be a city resident and that the child must be three or four years old. 4-year-olds across the city and 3-year-olds whose families are under the 300 federal poverty level are eligible, as well as children who have a sibling already in the program. For new SPP providers, existing 3-year-olds who were in their program will go in as 4-year-olds for the first year however this only applies for the first year as a provider. Parents are coming in desiring a two-year program for their 3-year-olds for continuity of care and we are having ongoing discussions regarding the ramifications of prioritizing 4-year-olds with city council. L. Gaskill-Gaddis asked if SPP providers will need to recruit new children every year since they won't have the continuity of care for three-year-olds. S. Sidorowicz replied that if they were selected as an SPP child those 3-year-olds will stay in the program, however if they were not the child would be placed in another classroom on-site. E. Chayet asked if it was a city council decision or LOC recommendation to prioritize 4-year-olds. S. Sidorowicz replied that he believes it was written in the ordinance to prioritize 4-year olds, then 3-year olds, and finally some kind of grandfathering. R. Kagi asked if DEEL was able to access the state early achievers professional development for support. H. Miller replied that we adopted two curriculum, High Scope and Creative Curriculum of which we have been relying on state training.

K. Washington asked what we are doing with classrooms provided by the district. H. Miller replied that the school board voted on August 19 and authorized three classrooms which are Bailey Gatzert, Van Asselt and the old Van Asselt. There will continue to be issues with the school board over some concerns such as space, unknowns around enrollment, and the new charter ruling. R. Kagi stated that the Mayor talked about possibly using community centers for space and wondered if that was occurring in this first round? H. Miller replied that it is not in the first round, however it is being discussed as part of the expansion plan. L. Gaskill-Gaddis asked if the new authorized SPS classrooms are being created from scratch and if the teachers in the new classrooms are district employees who will be paid by the district? S. Sidorowicz replied that the district classrooms are being created from scratch and that the teachers in district classrooms will be paid by the salary schedule of the district.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.