

## **Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS)**

*May 6, 2009*

### **Schools Represented:**

#### **Elementary Schools:**

Alderwood  
Carl Cozier  
Columbia  
Geneva  
Happy Valley  
Lowell  
Northern Heights  
Roosevelt  
Silver Beach

#### **Middle Schools:**

Fairhaven  
Shuksan  
Whatcom

#### **High Schools:**

Squalicum

**Co Chairs:** Mary LeDonne and Pam Behee

**District Staff:** Dr. Kenneth D. Vedra, Superintendent  
Jim Facciano, Director of Curriculum

**Note Taker:** Nancy Merry, secretary to the Superintendent

### **Announcements**

Mary LeDonne suggested members of Parent Advisory Committee talk to their school community, including PTA members, to encourage participation in Parent Advisory next year.

Kerri Sloan, Fairhaven Middle School, asked members to find out if their PTA treasurer would be willing to audit other school's financial books.

Meg Metzger, Happy Valley Elementary School, asked how the Parent Advisory Committee could be linked with PTA's and Site Councils. Ms. LeDonne said she would include this as an agenda item for the June 3 meeting.

### **Board Update**

Mary LeDonne reported at the April 23, 2009, Board Meeting, the Board recognized Sehome High School robotics students who received first in the 2009 Robotics Competition at the Microsoft Seattle Regionals. The Board also recognized seven district teachers who were named master science teachers with the North Cascades and Olympic Science Partnership (NCOSP) program; two teachers who were selected to work with NCOSP on geology and geology instructional material projects; and George (Pinky) Nelson for his work with the district on science education reform.

### **TaskForce Update**

Superintendent Ken Vedra asked Meg Metzger to report on the Highly Capable Learners (HCL) Task Force. Ms. Metzger reported the Task Force defined what they value. Due to budget reductions, there will be a cut in HCL staff. The Task Force is recommending HCL be taught within classrooms, in flexible groups of students. They are working on a survey for all grade 1–8 teachers and would like to have parents participate in the survey. Jim Facciano, director of Curriculum, said some of the items being considered by the Task Force are:

- how do you recognize these students;
- what are strategies for meeting their needs;
- how do you create a differentiated model for identifying students.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a program that trains teachers to recognize students who have challenges in the classroom—whether high or low functioning. The district is including RTI training in professional development for teachers. The district is looking at other ways to identify students that need accelerated learning as well as those that need remediation.

As the program is being implemented over the next two years, teachers and parents together will observe students and discuss interventions that can occur within the classroom, what change in delivery should be implemented, and how to help parents navigate through the system. The Task Force will continue to meet to assess progress and decide whether to continue the program or to make changes. This will benefit students by assessing them more quickly.

### **Flu Update**

The County Health Department is no longer recommending closing schools in the event of a confirmed case of the flu. More emphasis is being placed on staff and parents to keep children home for seven days if flu symptoms are evident.

### **Budget Update**

The district Website was updated on Monday, May 4 with the latest information on the budget reduction plan (<http://www.bham.wednet.edu/staff/budgetupdate2009.htm>). Staffing needs for 2009–10 are being considered with letters going to certificated staff by May 15 notifying them if they have a position for next year. Dr. Vedra recognized it is a very difficult time for all staff.

### **World Language and Curriculum Updates**

Jim Facciano, director of Curriculum gave an update on curriculum and stressed his ultimate vision is to bring the district into a guaranteed K-12 core curriculum.

#### **World Language**

The World Language Task Force has recommended implementation of a K-12 world language program. However, in view of the current budget situation, it is not a reality at this time and the focus is to implement a world language requirement for the secondary level. Beginning with the class of 2014, students must have two years of a foreign language in order to graduate.

At the elementary and middle school levels, several options are being investigated to introduce world language at earlier grades. A suggestion was made to use exchange students from Whatcom Community College as tutors. The college is having problems finding homes for exchange students and there may be a way to help each other.

### Math

Balanced Math is being implemented using our own teachers as coaches.

At the elementary level, Mr. Facciano would like to find a way to update resources. At the middle level, the curriculum has been defined and they are beginning to develop a process to identify 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in order to place them in the most appropriate 6<sup>th</sup> grade math class. He believes several components should be used when considering placement, not just WASL scores. Facciano would like to expand the offerings into other math-related classes.

At the high school level, current 8<sup>th</sup> graders are required to have three math credits to graduate. There are several initiatives in place at the schools, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), Gateway to Technology, and Project Lead the Way.

### Social Studies and Language Arts

U.S. and World History are the most common social studies offered, but Facciano is working to alter the curriculum and move to a more global focus using an inquiry-based approach.

In language arts, Facciano is reviewing the literacy guide and would like to add more detail. He would also like to create more universal writing assessments. He plans to audit the school libraries to assure they are at the same level and would like to bring in Junior Great Books.

### Other

- Handwriting, spelling, and keyboarding will all be included in curriculum.
- Principals are receiving more professional development in order to be able to teach teachers.
- Next year, health will be included in the science curriculum in grades K-8.
- Mr. Facciano indicated that the district report cards are based on standards; therefore, the district must teach a standard-based curriculum.

### School Reports

#### Roosevelt Elementary School

Deb Vasquez reported on the arts focus at Roosevelt. She shared pictures of student murals that were done through Reflections and a grant from Allied Arts. She felt it was an excellent program that involved all students. Roosevelt also had a PTA sponsored chess tournament that was a fundraiser, and a 5K fun run, in combination with a barbecue, for the whole family.

### Group Sharing

Attendees were asked to share what they planned to take back to their school. Items included:

- Feeling positive about the math focus; sorry that world language has not been pushed more.

- Questions about how I-728 funds are allocated.
- Questions about summer school.
- Transition to “Response to Intervention.”
- Northern Heights is hosting a multicultural fair Friday May 8. It is open to all.
- Great curriculum presentation.
- Kulshan Middle School is hosting Rachel’s Challenge tonight. It is open to all.
- Feeling overwhelmed with the changes and concerned about what it means for her child, but expressed appreciation for Mr. Facciano as a “bright spot.”
- Thank you to Roosevelt and Northern Heights elementary schools for their work with Allied Arts.
- Squalicum High School is having Storm classic dinner Friday night. It is open to all.
- Concerned about electives at middle school. Need to get world languages in sooner.
- Enjoyed Allied Arts art display.
- Allied Arts presentation was great.
- Despite budget cuts, Facciano is making some great changes.
- At Roosevelt, they are doing harder math at earlier grades.
- Thank you to those working on HCL Task Force.
- Excited about broadening access to HCL.
- Excited about what is happening in curriculum.
- Concerned about middle school sports. Vedra indicated the district is working on a pay-to-play plan or with the Boys and Girls Club. It has to be cost neutral to the district.
- Excited about the new Shuksan and the tear down of the old school, which is happening almost 18 months earlier than originally planned.
- Need to establish a better volunteer network like LINK in Lake Washington.
- Empathy for teachers. They need support during these difficult times.
- Happy Valley is putting on Wizard of Oz with two casts so more students could be involved.
- Status of the Building Efficiency Task Force. Dr. Vedra will ask the Board to approve a task force at the May 28, 2009 School Board meeting.
- Columbia has a play next week.
- Whatcom construction is going really well. Should be done by end of summer.

### **School Reports**

Members may sign up for sharing time at each meeting. This is an opportunity to share a best practice or to bring up a concern.

### **Suggested Agenda for Next Meeting**

- Bellingham Public School Foundation
- Linking Parent Advisory with PTA’s and Site Councils

### **Future Meetings:**

June 3, 2009, 9:15 a.m. at Central Services, 1306 Dupont, Board Room