

Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee

January 9, 2008

Note taker: Nancy Merry

District Announcements

Susan Zoller, deputy superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, announced that informative presentations about the upcoming school levies are underway to school staff and parent groups. In March, the community will have an opportunity to vote on two replacement levies, one for maintenance and operations and one for technology. Fact sheets about two levies were made available.

All grades are now on the semester system. The end of the first semester is January 25. Students will not be in school January 28 as it is a teacher workday. The first day of the second semester is January 29. Report cards will be mailed or sent home with students shortly after.

On January 14, high school students will be presenting their Culminating Projects to a panel. Zoller encouraged parents to be a panelists at either the January or spring presentations. Some of presentations will be videotaped to be shown to middle school students to give them an idea of what is expected.

School Announcements

A parent requested a task force to consider the rules surrounding religion in schools. She feels some students are not allowed to express personal beliefs, while others are. The rules needs to be the same for all students, regardless of beliefs. Mary LaDonne asked that she document her concerns in an email to her.

A parent inquired if the governor's review of new math standards would be made available to members of the community. Zoller indicated that district staff are following this and will make the information available.

Budget Process

Brett Greenwood, Business and Finance manager distributed handouts on the District Budget Model. Greenwood explained that the District funding is determined by enrollment. The state and federal government funds approximately 80% with the remaining 20% coming from local levy funds. Greenwood made an interesting point that the state does not fund technology as they do not consider technology part of basic education.

A District Budget Advisory Committee (DBAC), comprised of teachers, community members, parents and administrators, begin meeting in February to review building requests for funds and anticipated revenue. The Committee makes their recommendations to the Superintendent before being presented to the School Board for approval. Due to lack of available funds, not all requests are granted; however, curriculum issues

are a priority. The District currently spends approximately \$8,846 per student per year on education, which is below the state average, while maintaining approximately 5% in the fund balance

Greenwood was invited to return to the Parent Advisory Committee during the DBAC's deliberation to report on the types of requests received.

For more information on the state's education budget, visit the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's website at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SAFS/default.asp>.

According to the District's 2006–2007 Annual Financial Report:

Total Revenue:	\$87,397,549.	
State General Fund	46,402,442.	(53.1%)
State Special Fund	12,336,840.	(14.1%)
Local Tax	17,688,865.	(20.2%)
Federal	6,883,753.	(07.9%)
Local Non-Tax	3,879,160.	(04.4%)
Other	206,489.	(00.3%)
Total Expenditures by Activity:	\$86,618,030.	
Teaching	53,706,171.	
Teaching Support	8,829,966.	
Central Administration	5,513,614.	
Building Administration	4,989,655.	
Support Services	13,578,624.	

Special Needs Students

Sue Thomas, director of Special Education, introduced Lucille Nollette, assistant director of Special Education, and distributed packets of information. The District currently serves 1,356 special education students with a staff of 86.75 FTE certificated teachers, support staff, and administrators and 67.87 FTE classified paraeducators, secretaries, and job coaches.

In order to be eligible for services, students must qualify under one (or more) of fourteen federal disabilities; their disability must adversely affect their education; and there needs to be specially defined instruction to serve their needs. Their education must also be provided in the least restrictive environment possible. Special education services are provided at no cost to the families. According to Thomas, there are laws and regulations that govern special education which must be closely followed.

Bellingham provides a full continuum of services for students from age 3 to 21; with a birth to age three program beginning with the 2009–2010 school year. Services are provided in every school with some specialized services provided off-site.

Funding for special educations comes from several sources, including basic education, state categorically funding (received only if less than 12.7% of total enrollment is special

education), Medicaid, apportionment allocation, federal funds, the District, and Safety Net reimbursement. Special education is never fully funded and Thomas noted that the special education lawsuit requiring the state to fully fund special education is still in litigation.

Thomas responded to questions.

Highly Capable Learner's Program

Susan Peterson, director of Federal and Special Programs, and Peggy Taylor, HCLP facilitator, presented information on the Highly Capable Learner's Program.

Students in the HCLP program must qualify for the program through a process of nomination and testing. Once accepted into the program, each student has an individual learning plan that supplements regular classroom instruction. The program, funded by the state and district, currently serves 33 students in grades K-5; 89 in grades 6-8; and 261 in grades 9-12. Two facilitators work to plan student activities, conduct student testing, provide teacher support and individual student planning.

Peterson responded to questions and comments from members of the committee, including:

- The District needs to look at differentiated instruction for each student not just for students in specialized programs.
- There must be outstanding teachers in the general education classroom to better serve all students in a differentiated instruction model.
- There should be better communication to parents about the nomination process for students to be tested for the Highly Capable Program.

Future Meetings/Topics

February 6, 2008	Back on Track Reading Program (Nan Thomas)
Roeder Board Room	Highly Capable Learner's Program, <i>continued</i>
9:15 a.m.	Electives in Schools
February 21, 2008	Assessments
Kulshan Middle School	Finance (Maintenance and Operation and Technology Levy)
6:30 p.m.	