

Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee

June 4, 2008

Co-Chair: Mary LeDonne

Note taker: Nancy Merry

Opening Comments

Mary LeDonne asked members to report on school activities. Most reported things were slowing down. LeDonne updated the members on School Board decisions, including approval of the elementary science curriculum and the high school pre-calculus textbook.

Questions and Answers from Superintendent Ken Vedra

Superintendent Vedra responded to a question about the high school schedule during WASL testing. According to Dr. Vedra, all students must come to school in order for the day to count. Vedra acknowledged that work is needed to make sure students who are not taking the WASL are engaged in learning. This is a topic he will be discussing with high school principals next year. Options were discussed for keeping these students involved and Dr. Vedra appreciated the suggestions but indicated final decisions will be made by the principals. Vedra discussed the problems with the information released by OSPI on the state WASL scores and graduation rates.

Dr. Vedra reported that he has met with the superintendents in the county to discuss how they could work together to ensure all Whatcom County students are prepared for college and careers. Some possible suggestions include aligning middle and high school bell schedules so middle school students can more easily take high school classes; establishing centers for technical educations that are available to all county students Meetings have either been held or are scheduled with various industry leaders. Coordinating schedules and transportation are among issues which will need to be solved.

A question was asked about the start times for schools and Dr. Vedra commented that changing school start and end times impacts extracurricular activities, sports, etc.

Vedra asked for help from Parent Advisory members as the District considers several important issues next year. Some of the issues include all-day kindergarten; world languages; graduation requirements; how technology can assist and support learning; and extended school day. The priority, in Dr. Vedra's opinion, is continuing to focus on the whole child and to make sure students are receiving a well-rounded education.

Dr. Vedra gave an update on the status of International Baccalaureate applications. There are two application dates—May 1 and November 1. Vedra anticipates the principal at Wade King Elementary School will make application after the school opens in the fall. Other elementary schools are considering making application but at this time it is premature for them to do so. There are no middle schools currently considering becoming an IB school. Principals are exploring other opportunities for learning such as focusing on the arts or science.

A question was asked whether the District is considering any plans to establish a program to support parents who are homeschooling. For a variety of reasons, Dr. Vedra said there is a large

number of families who home school. He has had discussions about establishing such a program, but more information is needed.

Dr. Vedra thanked the committee members for their participation. He especially expressed his appreciation to Mary LeDonne and Amanda Nunez for co-chairing the committee and Meg Metzger and Sharon Stahl for putting together the Sharing Best Practices Faire. Dr. Vedra expressed the importance of each school having a representative on the Parent Advisory Committee. Members thanked Dr. Vedra for the vision he has brought to the District.

Best Practices Faire

Meg Metzger and Sharon Stahl sent a summary of the Faire to members by email and encouraged members to share this information with their parent organizations. Metzger will also email the notes to those who attended the Faire. A request was made to have a location on the District website for parent organizations to post planning and scheduling information as a way to centralize certain activities. The Superintendent's office will coordinate a meeting for Sharon Stahl, Michael Jay and Ann Reed, director of Instructional Technology and Libraries, to discuss how this could work. Members indicated a desire to have a Faire in the fall on communications and newsletters facilitated by Tanya Rowe, director of School Information.

There was discussion on the pros and cons of schools being affiliated with the state PTA organization. It was decided that this should be a topic for the September 10, 2008 meeting. Sharon Stahl agreed to speak from the perspective of both a PTO and a PTA. Meg Metzger will invite a representative from either the regional or state Parent Teacher Association to share the benefits of belonging to the PTA. The boards from school parent organizations are encouraged to attend. At the September meeting, the Parent Advisory Committee will hold their regular meeting from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. and hold the PTA/PTO portion from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. It was also suggested that there be a Sharing Faire in the fall with this being one of the topics.

Chairs for 2008–2009

Mary LeDonne will carry over as one of the co-chairs for 2008–2009. The other co-chair will be named in August or September. Each co-chair will commit to act as co-chair for two years, with their term expiring on alternating years.

Membership

Mary LeDonne will work on the membership list for 2008–2009 over the summer. The Superintendent's Office will obtain the list of PTA/PTO presidents and email to LeDonne.

Meeting Dates for 2008–2009

Meetings for 2008–2009 will be held from 9:15 until 11:15 a.m. in the Board Room at the Roeder Administration Building, unless otherwise noted:

September 10 (Room 212)	February 4 (Room 212)
October 1	March 4
November 5	April 1
December 3	May 6 (Room 212)
January 7	June 3

Summary of the Year

Ms. LeDonne asked members to shared their thoughts on the following:

- How many will represent the same school next year?
- How many will be moving to different school?
- How do you feel about PAC?
- Who is your parent group leader for next year?