

Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee

October 3, 2007

Note taker: Nancy Merry

Welcome and Introductions

Superintendent Kenneth Vedra welcomed parents and thanked them for their participation. Attendees introduced themselves and indicated the school they represented. Administrators also introduced themselves.

Vedra opened the meeting by expressing his desire to have more parent involvement. He indicated willingness to make changes in the meeting structure and meeting time to meet the needs of those participating. He suggested holding two meetings in the evening during the school year to cover special topics that would have a wide level of interest. Those attending indicated they preferred to meet the first Wednesday of each month, from 9:15 to 11:15 a.m. The last 15 minutes will be questions and answers so those who need to leave will not miss main topics.

Vedra would like attendees to share information learned at Parent Advisory with their schools using school newsletters and parent meetings. Notes from meetings will be available on the District Website and will be emailed to those with email addresses.

Dr. Vedra emphasized that this is not his meeting, but is for them. As such, he asked for two people to serve as co-chairs to establish the agenda with him for each meeting and help run the meeting. District staff will attend as needed to share information on topics being presented. Co-chairs will solicit topic information from members of the Committee in advance; additional topics will be included as routine. Evening meetings will be reserved for special topics. Mary LeDonne and Amanda Nunez volunteered to be co-chairs. School specific topics should be discussed first with the school principal before bringing it up at Parent Advisory. Topics and comments made at Parent Advisory meetings should be at a level that can be taken to the Board of Directors to impact schools and district.

EHJU 4240, Simple Majority

Vedra asked Ann Whitmyer, School Board Director, to explain the purpose of EHJR 4240, Simple Majority. If approved by voters in the November election, this measure would allow school levies to pass with a simple majority (50% of voters plus 1 vote) instead of a 60% super majority that currently applies. Vedra asked attendees to encourage people to register to vote and to exercise their right to vote.

District Finance

The District's has two levy's expiring this year—the maintenance and operation levy (M & O levy) and the technology levy. Therefore, both issues will come before the voters in the spring. The M & O levy provides approximately 20% of the District's operation budget. Passage of both levies is important for the District's operation since, in

Washington, levies are for a specific number of years, then expire. Capital bonds are on an as-needed basis based on facility needs.

A possible topic for a future Parent Advisory meeting or for an evening meeting is an in-depth look at school finance.

Student Enrollment

Student enrollment in the District has remained stable with a total head count on September 7, 2007 of 10,540. State funding is based on a formula that averages full-time equivalent enrollment numbers across the entire 2007–2008 school year. The district expects about the same number of actual annual average FTE as budgeted, based on first-week enrollment numbers. Vedra will report grade-by-grade enrollment at the next meeting. While the enrollment projection district-wide is on target, projection vs. actual is off at some schools. Adjustments in staffing have been made for the variance in enrollment at schools.

2007–2008 District Budget

The 2007–2008 district budget is available for public inspection. It identifies the financial plan for this year and included \$94.7 million in the general fund for the fiscal year September 1, 2007 through August 30, 2008. The capital plan is also included in the budget.

November Elections

The November elections include three positions for school board. Vedra encouraged everyone to know the candidates and to exercise their right to vote.

Superintendent's Student Advisory Council

Superintendent Vedra is initiating a Superintendent's Student Advisory Council comprised of a junior and senior from each high school to discuss issues at their schools, review policy and make recommendations. The first meeting will be October 4 from 7:30–9 a.m. Students were selected based on an application process. Activities may also include a field trip to meet with state legislators in Olympia. Each outgoing senior will select an incoming junior for the next year. Vedra will share useful information from Student Advisory Council with the Parent Advisory Committee. The comment was made that the PTA's would like to involve more student voice in school activities and decisions.

Student and Staff Recognition

A new program, called Shining Star, recognizes students and staff during School Board meetings for their outstanding effort or work. Already this year, 20 individuals have been recognized. All schools will probably be recognized in some way during the school year.

Parent Teacher Conference

Deputy Superintendent Susan Zoller reported on the task group that met last year to review use of time, including parent teacher conference dates. The entire district is now on a semester system, with conferences in November. Each school will hold two evening

conferences. Conference time will include a progress report, but not a report card. Report cards will be issued in January and June. Zoller indicated parents will be asked for feedback on the new schedule. The District recognizes this change may not work for all families.

School Calendar Overview

The Family Back to School calendar has been mailed to all families. An abbreviated calendar with key dates is available on the District website. Parents are encouraged to register for e-news by going to the District home page (www.bham.wednet.edu) and click on e-news registration. This will enable parents to receive notices of snow information. Snow and emergency information is posted on www.bsd501.org. This information will also be translated to Spanish. The English Language Learners' Department will have an emergency hotline for emergency information in Spanish, Russian and Punjabi.

In response to a question, AP exams are offered during the school day, at a date and time designated by AP. The dates for the 2007–2008 school year are May 5–9 and May 12–16. There is a morning session beginning at 8 a.m. and an afternoon session at 12 noon.

WASL

AYP benchmarks change next year with the bar being raised. Additional information will be provided to keep parents aware of what this means for mathematics and literacy. The reauthorization of ESEA is occurring during this congressional period with significant changes being proposed. It may or may not reach the President's desk for signature. Additional information may be accessed through the OSPI website (<http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/>) and through Representative George Miller's website on his committee's work on Elementary and Secondary Education/No Child Left Behind (<http://edlabor.house.gov/micro/nclb.shtml>). Miller's committee work may not get through Congress until February or March.

Vedra would like to look at what we are doing for students at both end of the educational spectrum. Catch Up/Keep Up/Move Up is a program that measures gains for individual students, not just on a districtwide basis. Superintendent Vedra explained how the International Baccalaureate program works at K-12. He feels it coordinates a common teaching language and is appropriate for all students, especially at the primary and immediate levels. He discussed different programs that are available for students and explained that professional development is a key element.

OTHER

Building specific questions should be directed to the principal first, then to Doug Kyles or Sherrie Brown, School Administrators for each building. Districtwide questions can be brought to Parent Advisory Committee.

Culminating Projects are being handled by Sherrie Brown. Vedra will ask Brown to discuss further with Marla Bronstein.

Mary LaDonne expressed concern about student safety for drivers and walkers on days when it freezes. Superintendent Vedra will follow up. There was general discussion about the process of calling snow days and late arrival. Susan Zoller explained that the school calendar is part of the contract with BEA. New language has been added to the BEA contract stating that up to two snow days will be added to end of school year. If there are more than two snow days, the contractual language states that there will be discussion between BEA and District to decide when these additional days will be added. Mid-winter break has also been changed to a long weekend to allow school to end earlier. By law, the District has to have 180 days of schools, 6 hours a day, Superintendent Vedra would like to see the law changed to a total number of hours of instruction time (1080 hours of instruction instead of 180 days). This would allow minutes to be added to each school day to make up lost time.

If there are topics you would like discussed at the evening meetings, please let the co-chairs know.

Future Meetings/Topics

November 7, 2007: Procedures for closing schools and communication plan
Presentation of English Language Learner Program
Reviewing items of interest for future meetings
Dates for evening meetings (February 12 or 21, 2008)

December 5, 2007: AVID
Food Services Program (including free and reduced)

January 9, 2008: Budget Process
Transportation

Next Meeting

November 7, 2007 at 9:15 a.m. in Conference Room 212.