Meeting Summary

Meeting Title: Special Education Task Force Committee	
Date: October 3, 2019	Time: 3:45pm - 5:45pm
Facilitator: Mike Hansen, Deputy Superintendent, Richland School District Dr. Sara Sorensen Petersen, Clinical Assistant Professor of Education, Washington State University (WSI) Tri-Cities	

Attendance:

Amanda Fish, Special Education Teacher
Annamarie Carlson, Middle School Parent - **ABSENT**
April Gardner, Middle School Parent
Brian Moore, Assistant Superintendent
Constance Morelock, Special Education Teacher
Craig Smith, High School Parent
Eugene Nemeth, High School Parent
Heather Castleberry, Alternate Elementary Parent
Jill Ives, Special Education Teacher
Kelly Roseberg, Elementary Parent
Ken Hays, REA Representative - **ABSENT**
Kiley Hodges, Special Education Administrator
Kim Maldonado, General Education Teacher
Laurie Price, Special Education Teacher
Mandy Cathy, Special Education Administrator
Meg Fallows, Community Agency - **ABSENT**

Michael Summers, Elementary Parent
Mike Stevens, Alternate High School Parent
Molly Judkins, General Education Teacher
Myriam Bradshaw, Elementary Parent
Nicole Blake, Teaching, Learning & Curriculum Administrator
Nicki Sintay, PSE Representative - **ABSENT**
Rachel Carter, Itinerant Staff Member
Renae Yecha, Special Education Teacher
Rick Donahoe, School Board Member - **ABSENT**
Shana Borms, Principal
Summer Zumini, Special Education Teacher
Tamra Harrison, Alternate Middle School Parent
Tim Praino, Principal
Tonya Goche, High School Parent
Tracy Blakenship, Special Education Administrator
Zac Carpenter, Middle School Parent

Task	Notes
Entry Task and Purpose/Function	The committee's essential question for the day - *What are the strengths and needs of the Richland School District special education program and how do they align with the program's priorities?* When the committee arrived, they were reminded of the committee's goal and asked to review the group norms at their table.

Next, the committee started their entry task. During the entry task, they were asked to review the DRAFT Special Education Priorities and the OSPI Priorities at their tables.

The OSPI Priorities include;
1. Leadership
2. Growth mindset
3. Evidence-based practices
4. Resource allocation
5. Recruitment and retention
6. Professional development.

The DRAFT District Special Education Priorities include;
1. Schools develop high-quality inclusive practices and activities with a continuum of supports to meet the needs of each student at every school.
2. Students with disabilities are held to high expectations and given the appropriate supports and services to meet those high expectations.
3. Special education teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.
4. Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in skills necessary for adulthood such as post-secondary preparation, independent living, career development, and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.

Committee members were given an anonymous online poll to give their feedback on these priorities. Below are a few comments from the online poll.
- "Recruitment for teachers is a real problem."
- District required accountability of communication between case managers and general Ed teachers."

	● "I especially want to see our plan for post-secondary employment." ● "We'd like to see professional development for general education teachers." ● "I'm excited to see the continuum supports we put into place for our students."

Gallery Walk of Parent Survey Data	The committee was asked to visit charts posted around the room. The charts consisted of data gathered during a parent survey that was sent out in the Summer of 2019. These charts were broken down into different topics on the survey; 1) Special Education Information, 2) IEP Meeting, 3) IEP Content, 4) IEP Implementation, 5) Communication, 6) Instruction, Expectations, and Access, and 7) Transition Services.
	
	While the committee was reviewing the data gathered during the parent survey, they were asked to write any comments or questions they had on the chart.
	
	After committee members individually looked at the data, they paired up with a partner to discuss the following prompts;
	   1. Three trends noticed in the data.
	   2. Two things that were not expected in the data.
	   3. One thing that they wished they knew more about.
	
	Once they discussed the above prompts with their partner, they went back to their tables. Each table shared out trends they noticed from the data.
	● Table 1 - "I noticed there was a large category of negative feedback on communication. I would have expected to see more negativity overall."
	● Table 2 - "The data seemed to be more positive than expected. I'm interested in how many SpEd parents filled out the information."
	● Table 3 - "I was also surprised by the overwhelmingly positive responses."
	● Table 4 - "We all agreed there was a lot more positive feedback than negative."

	- Table 5 - "I thought based on the feedback last year, that the data would be more negative. Parents need more education on how to read an IEP." - Table 6 - "I saw a lot of the same trends previously mentioned. Interestingly, there was not more feedback in general. I wish we knew more about the percentage that didn't fill out the survey."

SNOB Analysis (Strengths, Needs, Opportunities, Barriers)
    - Strengths
    - Needs
	During the next activity, the committee looked into the strengths and the needs of the Richland School District (RSD) special education program. To start the activity off, each individual was asked to anonymously write down their opinions on the strengths and needs of the program using an online survey. Below shows a handful of opinions from the committee on the strengths and needs of the program.
	
	Strengths -
	    - "Dedicated and hard-working educators. From admin to sped teachers to paraeducators. Everyone is well-intended and trying to do their best."
	    - "Access to community resources."
	    - "Strengths of teachers adaptability and professionalism."
	    - "There is passionate staff in RSD trying to provide quality services to students with limited time and resources."
	    - "The IEP process."
	
	Needs -
	    - "Intentional, transition planning supports for post-secondary."
	    - "Training for general education staff on best practices for working with children with special needs."
	    - "Need a common vision among admin to principals to teachers."
	    - "Having district-wide standards that all schools follow. Not different rules for different buildings."
	    - "Staff buy-in - culture shift for all staff."

	After the online poll, each table was asked to consider the information provided (urban collaborative review, citizen complaints, parent survey comments, and the in-room online poll) and how that information is connected to the DRAFT Special Education Priorities. Each table used these resources to complete a strengths and needs crosswalk chart.
Essential Question of the Day	After each table completed their strengths and needs crosswalk chart, the committee came back together to consider the day's essential question. The committee was asked what their thoughts, questions, and/or epiphanies were and how the strengths and needs of the Richland School District special education program aligned with the program's priorities. Below are some questions and comments that were given after this question was asked. ● "Why is the process so cumbersome? Why is the IEP process cumbersome and bureaucratic?" ● "Do we have any control or say over how the process is done. Is it a district or state decision?" ● "Strengths and needs should define priorities and lead priority."
Community Meeting Preparation	The next time the committee will be together will be at the first community meeting forum on October 17th. The draft agenda for the community meeting was shared with the committee. The agenda included sharing with the community the group norms and assumptions, the SETF process, the parent survey data, and strengths and needs found. There will be 2-3 discussion prompts that SETF committee members will facilitate. The committee was asked if anything was missing from the agenda. Below are a few comments and suggestions from committee members. ● "What has the district already done at a programmatic level? Can we list that (change in resource room)."

	● "There has been a lot of misinformation given to the community that should be cleared up." ● "We should let the community know the expectations of the committee."
Closing	The first community meeting will be held at Marcus Whitman Elementary on October 17th.