

District Advisory Council Talking Points

March 20, 2014

Boundary Committee

The district wants to create a committee to discuss the boundaries and composition for each of the four elementary schools when the new elementary school is operational. This will include discussions of programs like high needs/low incidence, which will need one north-end and one south-end program. Dr. Gary Plano wants input from the DAC about who should be on the committee and how many people should be on the committee. There will be a consultant to help with the process. While levels at each school will not be exactly the same at first, the populations will level out after about two years.

Todd Kelsay, Director of Transportation, will be tasked with creating multiple transportation scenarios for review. A city engineer will be asked to be an ad-hoc member of the committee to provide input on natural boundaries in the city and demographics experts will be available to support the committee.

The committee will launch in late September 2014 and work should be complete in May 2015, well before the new elementary school is operational.

Community Task Force on Youth Concerns

Communities that Care is an active group composed of representatives from organizations that serve youth on Mercer Island. It is a tactical organization that does specific outreach on issues of depression, anxiety and stress that manifest in unsafe behavior. Gary, in partnership with Mercer Island City manager Noel Treat, would like to name a similar committee with a larger scope.

The district and city are government entities and many parents do not believe it is the business of the district or city to get involved, thus it must be a community-based and driven process/committee. The DAC agreed that this needs to be more than just a school district issue. Cindy Goodwin says that many factors contribute to negative behavior and we can help parents and the community identify challenges that kids are having in order to prevent negative behavior.

Cindy and Gary are targeting the summer for a convening of the committee and then going into the next school year.

School District Disciplinary Appeals Council

The district has short-term suspensions (10 or fewer days) and long-term suspensions (11-90 days). Students can appeal long-term suspensions and remain in school until a final decision can be reached. Gary would like to create a Disciplinary Appeals Council so the board is not tasked with hearing these appeals. Legal counsel would be present during meetings. The district liability coverage would cover any members in the case of legal action when acting on behalf of the district.

Construction Update and Schedule

Brandy Fox is the district's consultant for the three construction projects. She was a part of the first remodel at the high school. There is already \$1.2 billion on school construction funding in the Puget Sound with another \$500 million potentially coming after an April election, so we're trying to go to bid early and secure the best price. The school district will create a website in the near future with updates regarding the three construction projects.

1000 Program Hours for K-8 / 24 Credit Requirement for Class of 2019

The legislature added the 24-credit requirement during the last legislative session. There will be new graduation requirements starting with the class of 2019 (current 7th graders). There may be staffing changes to account for the standards with each subject depending on student demand in light of the new requirements. The 24-credit requirement will begin with a nine-grade class (2019 graduating class). The board will be asking Gary to convene a "start-end" committee to potentially the bell schedule for the school district. This process could take a year of study.

School Impacts of Marijuana Legalization

A recent KING 5 News story highlighted an increase in school disciplines resulting from student use of marijuana, alcohol use and other unsafe behaviors from a large urban local district. Is it related to the legalizations of marijuana? We can't say for sure, but anecdotally there are more incidences and those incidences include more illicit drugs. There are also anecdotal incidents of student using drugs which might be masking other issues such as depression or anxiety. It is important that families, churches and other community organizations have open dialogues about use of drugs and alcohol.

Bridge-the-Gap

The Breakfast of Champions is on April 29 and is critical fundraising event for the school district.

Future meetings of the DAC

Friday, May 30, 12:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.
Mercer Island School District Board Room

Gary adjourns the meeting at 11:16 a.m.