
Written Public Comment for May 8, 2023 Budget Meeting

1. In the proposed budget, the Rachel Carson Program Facilitator stipend (.4 FTE) has been eliminated. My concerns about the ability for Rachel Carson to continue to provide the rich learning experiences as they have since 2005. The stipend allows the Rachel Carson facilitators to plan for site visits (aka field trips, about 3 per month), provide overnight experience for our 6th and 7th graders (overnight trip to Oxbow Park) and 8th graders (three night trip to Olympic National Park).
2. I am asking for the support of the Rachel Carson options program by continuing to provide the stipend for our facilitators. Our facilitators are vital to keep the essential elements of our program including a community service focus, student leadership development, and involvement in learning in the field. These pieces and many more are what makes the Rachel Carson program able to support and help middle school students thrive. Our students typically share how much they enjoyed and grew in their middle school experience, which is not the same for many middle schoolers.
3. Please restore the funding for the .4 FTE Rachel Carson Facilitator Position. The Rachel Carson Facilitator stipend is necessary to coordinate 20+ site visits each school year. The Rachel Carson Facilitator stipend is necessary to help recruit a diverse student population. The Rachel Carson Facilitator position allows for strong community partnerships (Oregon Food Bank, ECO, AgLink, etc.) to be formed and maintained. The Rachel Carson Facilitator position allows for all students to feel a sense of belonging and community.
4. My concern is about the reduction in resources allocated for the Rachel Carson Program of Environmental Science. In addition to cutting a .4 secretarial position, the district has decided to not fund the additional pay of 2 Co-Facilitators. The Program is ending its 19th year and has been very successful. Students, staff, and parent volunteers create a safe and collaborative learning space. Each year RC has almost 3 times the number of applications as spots available. Many of the students who do not get in through the lottery sign up and participate in second consideration. This year, for example, we had over 70 students participate in second consideration.
5. Please strongly consider restoring the funding for the .4 FTE Rachel Carson Facilitator Position. The position and stipend of the Rachel Carson Facilitator is necessary in order to coordinate the 20+ site visits that students and staff do each school year. These are an essential part of the program. The Rachel Carson Facilitator Stipend is necessary in order to help recruit a diverse student population the program, so that we accurately represent our Beaverton School District population. The Rachel Carson Facilitator position allows for strong community partnerships such as the Oregon Food Bank, ECO, AgLink, THPRD, etc. to be formed and maintained.
6. Rachel Carson is a middle school option program that opened in 2004. It has been a successful program that has educated around 1200 successful students. It has had the ability to draw students from not only around the district, but also bringing students back to Beaverton School District from area private and online schools. With our declining enrollment numbers in BSD, this program can continue to draw students back to our district. However, this successful middle school program has continually been cut back to an unrecognizable, almost unrepairable state that has difficulty drawing back families to the district. Rachel Carson Environmental Program needs to maintain its current funding for a part-time (0.4) Facilitator that is being cut for next school year. The Facilitator position at Rachel Carson is fundamental to the success of our program. The Facilitator works with community partners and transportation to arrange 82 day-trips and two multi-day trips for 180 students each year. These trips are essential to many facets of our program: bringing classroom learning into real-life, service learning, community building, and mentoring and leadership, just to name a few.

7. The Facilitator is the connection families have to learn more information about the program. The Facilitator organizes and presents at Open Houses, schedules shadowing for almost 200 5th graders, works with district office to fill 64 6th grade opening each year (typically receiving 150 - 180 applications for those 64 spots), organizes Second Consideration for about 75 5th graders, and communicating with district office and the school office to keep our enrollment numbers at 180. As you can see, these tasks and many other day-to-day tasks completed with the Facilitator position can not be usurped by the teachers in the program. Teachers already spend extra time to prepare for the almost weekly trips all the while losing their plan each week while we are out on these trips. It is too much to ask and won't be sustainable. It is important that the district continues to support at the current level a very successful program that it started almost 20 years ago.

District response: Through the budget development process there was a focused effort on systems and consistency – along with other priorities. With these reductions, there is now consistency between/among all middle school options programs and the staffing they receive. We will continue to work with the building leadership to fully understand program needs and may adjust as necessary.

8. High school must start later than 7:45 am. I live next door to Southridge and have seen my fair share of teenagers late to first period over the years. A later start time would reduce the dependence on coffee, energy drinks and illegal stimulants.

District response: The District is currently evaluating school schedules. This evaluation will be complete in the fall of 2023 with implementation in the 2024-25 school year.

9. I am a parent of a child who attends West TV Elementary. The current 1st grade class has about 62 students, more than any other grade. For kinder and 1st, there has been 3 teachers for this amount of students, but for 2023-24 year the school is budgeted for 2 teachers. Having only 2, puts this entire grade at a disadvantage and will negatively affect the children, parents, and teachers. We lucked out this year with the addition of Mrs. Wolf, an excellent teacher who excelled, even though she started at a disadvantage with a bare classroom only days prior to the start of the year. I am asking the board to please consider keeping her on with this class next year or adding another teacher now to prevent the expected hardship of the following year. The children deserve better and I believe it can be done. I have statistical data stating the support of 3 teachers for the amount of students and I am happy to provide if asked. Thank you for your time.

District response: All school staffing goes through the Staffing Allocation Methodology and then elementary is reviewed to ensure a minimum of two classroom teachers per grade level.