FOLLOW UP MEMO

TO: Members of the Superintendent's Community Advisory Council (S-CAC)

FROM: Debbie Lacy
Patrick Bannon

DATE: November 15, 2022

RE: Follow up to our November 9 committee meeting

cc: Arthur Jarvis, John Harrison, Melissa deVita, Eva Collins

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WHERE WE LEFT OFF

Picking up the threads of our last meeting, we wanted to start this time by viewing community engagement through the *technical lens* of partnerships and policies, and viewing community engagement as *a way of being* for the district – and all of us. In other contexts, these approaches are often referred to as technical and adaptive, which we will use for ease in this memo.

WARM WELCOME

We want to give a huge thank you to Dr. Jarvis for joining our meeting this last time. He underscored the importance of our work together, encouraged us to think big and, importantly reminded us that our community – Bellevue – is special. The perfect laboratory for this kind of work.

TECHNICAL, ADAPTIVE OR BOTH?

In this meeting, our work together in shaping recommendations on the District's community engagement had us examining the "technical" aspects of the work and defining an adaptive or "ideal" state of the work. We broke into small groups to discuss our thinking on several questions and two big themes: *technical and adaptive*, or *ideal*, approaches to community engagement.

For the *technical aspects* of community engagement, we centered our discussion on three questions, below, with themes that emerged from the conversations.

- What questions do you have about the MOU process?
    - As one might expect, these questions fell mostly in the category of "process." Folks want to know how these decisions get made, by whom, and on what timeline. Some also expressed concern for staff capacity to manage these MOU / Partnerships.
- What advice would you give the district in how to determine which organizations to formally partner with?

    - Council members recommended that the district be clear, and data driven where possible, about the outcomes of the partnerships. And that the partnerships expand opportunities for our students.
- How might the district expand the number of partnerships it has with limited staff capacity?
    - Some recommendations included designating staff to manage and support the partnerships. They encouraged making the process easier through technology. And creating an evaluation rubric that measures the need that can be balanced with the proposed service array – this can show the value of the partnership.

Conversations on our *adaptive approach* were prompted by a series of five questions – not everyone got through them all. The discussions were rich and are something we can build on at our next meeting. These questions included:

- Community Engagement as a "way of being" is, for now, an "idyllic" state for school districts. *What does this mean to you and what would this look like for Bellevue?*
    - This ideal state is centered on community, multi-culturally, inclusively, through a shared vision. It would hear from and include those "quiet voices" that aren't always heard or sought out. It would build solutions together, with, not "to" or "for."
- What opportunities exist or can we create to immerse BSD more deeply into the community?
    - Participants recommend that the district meet communities where they are. Don't ask them to do all the work – go to them, get on existing agendas, prioritize multi-language facilitation, celebrate more. Engage social media as a means of outreach and sharing of information.
- What barriers get in the way of deeper relationships between BSD and the greater community, and how can we overcome them together?
    - Trust is a barrier, partially supported or driven by history and experience. Global competency is a must and isn't currently a strength. Find common threads to build on and celebrate, even while celebrating diversity and individual achievements.
- How, specifically, might we work together to build trust, bridges, and working relationships?
- When should the district "inform" rather than "seek input?"

NEXT UP

We meet again December 7th, the location is yet to be determined. At this meeting we will continue and build on the conversation about *technical* and *adaptive* engagement started at the November meeting.

MANY THANKS!

Debbie and Patrick