



NORTH THURSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Community Conversation

October 18, 2022

Success in the Early Years

Increased percentage of children ready for Kindergarten

Overview: On October 18, 2022, the Board of Directors held a Community Conversation with stakeholders to learn about Kindergarten readiness. Following that event, Board members had a debriefing conversation and reviewed feedback from participants. They developed a Board determination articulating the Board's vision for the district.

This effort directly aligns with the 2022 NTPS Strategic Plan, precisely:

- Goal One: Success in the Early Years
- Every student will engage in meaningful learning opportunities that foster curiosity and joy of learning while developing the academic and social skills to meet/exceed standards by the end of Grade 3.
- Outcome b:
 - Increased percentage of children ready for Kindergarten

Event: The Board of Directors invited early learning providers, the Child Care Action Council, JBLM representatives, local and regional elected representatives, community-based organization leaders, and community members to participate in the Community Conversation held at the District Administrative Building from 11:45-1:30 p.m. Participants listened to three presentations: Child Care Action Council – the impact of the pandemic on child care presented by Gary Burris; North Thurston Public Schools – early learning programming and Kindergarten readiness data presented by Dr. Dianne Heckman; and a Young Child and Families Center of Lacey presented by Kyle Cronk of the YMCA, Jennifer Burbidge of the City of Lacey, and Troy Oliver from North Thurston Public Schools. Participants enjoyed lunch and engaged in facilitated table conversations. Following the Community Conversation, the Board engaged in a work session to review the notes from the table facilitators and discuss what they learned.

Board Determination:

As a result of the community Conversation, The Board's Determination is as follows:

1. The Board confirms that Goal One of the 2022-2028 Strategic Plan is an essential goal for us to achieve. Further, the Board affirms that Outcome b is an important, measurable outcome. The Board recognizes that investments in early learning significantly impact Kindergarten readiness and a child's success in elementary school.
2. The Board recognizes that NTPS has provided well-received family programs, and this crucial work should continue. Further, the Board acknowledges that providing space for early learning programming such as ECEAP, Head Start, and Future-Ready Kindergarten is critical to Kindergarten readiness.

The Board expects the Superintendent and her staff to continue to partner with community-based organizations and early learning key stakeholders to strengthen support for families of young children.

3. The Board expects the Superintendent and her staff to continue to explore the Young Child and Families Center concept and provide a recommendation for funding the Center. The Board recognizes that achieving the goal of the Center requires strong partnerships with the City of Lacey and the YMCA. The Board believes NTPS must be a significant partner in meeting the preschool-programming gap within the community.
4. The Board confirms that early learning must continue to be a legislative priority for NTPS. We must secure Universal Preschool and public funding for current preschool and childcare providers, so more children have access to high-quality preschool programs.