FOLLOW UP MEMO

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

FROM: Monik Martinez
Patrick Bannon

DATE: October 13, 2023

RE: Kickoff Meeting October 11

cc: Kelly Aramaki, John Harrison, Jason Golec, Shomari Jones, Heather Sanchez

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A New Year And Renewed Focus:

It was so great to see everyone at our kickoff meeting. Whether returning or brand new to the process, we really appreciate everyone's commitment, ideas, and participation. Last year we focused on community engagement practice at a high level. This year, we will put that practice to the test as we advise, observe and improve BSD's community engagement work on Middle School Enrollment. It was a packed meeting and will be a busy year for all of us. Thank you in advance for all you will do to support our students and families.

While we are giving thanks, Thank You! to Dr. Aramaki for his words of encouragement and his participation in our meeting. Dr. Aramaki challenged us to push the district and to assist in being eyes and ears to the community. We took him to heart in our break-out groups and will continue to find ways to improve the community engagement processes the district engages in moving forward.

The Task At Hand:

Declining enrollment has been a major concern for Bellevue – and nearly every district around us – for a few years now. Jason Golec and John Harrison provided an overview of the enrollment data and projections for the future. This data will be shared with all of SCAC as will the PowerPoint that was used during the meeting. Declining enrollment leads to shrinking budgets, which is one of the critical issues Bellevue is grappling with. The district will begin the process of outreach and engagement in our community to share the enrollment data, projections, and implications on the budget the week of October 23rd. This process will be anchored in equity-driven decision-making, a practice that Shomari Jones outlined in our meeting and is contained in the PowerPoint you'll be receiving. One of our jobs is to ensure that engagement is done through the equity – driven practice and to make suggestions for improvements to the draft community engagement plans.

Community Engagement Review:

In small groups, we examined the draft community engagement plan around middle school enrollment planning and worked through three prompts in discussion:

- Is the process true to equity-driven decision-making?

- Are we missing anything?
- What other advice do you have as we engage on this?

Our groups responded with rich feedback and actionable suggestions. The feedback largely fell into three areas:

- Communications: Ensure that communication is timely, is easily understood by the receiver, that it is translated, that it clearly articulates the intent of the engagement and defines the terms that are used so everyone is working from the same place.
- Access: Time the meetings so that families can make it work with their schedules, holding some forums in community spaces so that we aren't always asking people to come to "us," provide childcare and food, have interpreters present, and make sure to engage with students where they are.
- Community Partners: Engage with community partners early in the process, providing them with communications tools to help spread the message and gather feedback, and engaging community partner space for some of the public meetings.

WHAT'S NEXT:

The community forums are scheduled to begin the week of October 23rd. As John Harrison said, we'd love for as many of you as possible to attend at least one. As an observer, some questions you might be asking yourself during these meetings are:

- Did the meeting follow the protocols for equity-driven decision making?
- Was everyone heard?
- Who was missing?
- What could have been better?

We'd love to hear your feedback on these forums at our next meeting November 15th. In addition, we are hoping some of you can join a handful of subcommittees to deepen our work in between meetings. The issues we are exploring include survey language, review of collateral materials the district will use in the community, the structure of the engagement overall, and identifying trusted messengers. If you're interested in any of this, please let us know.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, THANK YOU! This work is so important to our community. With your passion, commitment and really great ideas, we can support the district to make authentically equity-centered decisions.

We are honored to serve with you.

Take good care!

MANY THANKS!
Monik and Patrick