

## Community Linkage Meeting: February 24, 2011

- Strategic Mission (Policy E-1)
- Academic Achievement (Policy E-2)
- Academic Competence (Policy E-2.1)
- Life and Learning Skills (Policy E-3)
- Personal Attributes and Ethics (Policy E-4)

The School Board welcomed community members, statewide experts, and early learning teachers. President Ann Whitmyer stated that the purpose of this community linkage is to discuss and explore early childhood education and the role of early childhood learning to help the District meet the desired ends/outcomes for students.

The attendees were:

- Linda Crawford, Program Coordinator, Child and Family Studies, Bellingham Technical College
- Dee West, Director of Early Learning and Family Services, Opportunity Council
- Sally Holloway, Coordinator of Education Programs, Whatcom Community College
- Dave Finet, Executive Director, Opportunity Council
- Kris Smith, Coordinator of Parent Education, Whatcom Community College
- Vicki Hubner, Consultant, Early Learning Partnership
- Sandra Berner, Executive Director, Whatcom Center for Early Learning
- Wilanne Ollila-Perry, Child Care and Family Resources, Opportunity Council
- Eileen Hughes, Associate Professor, Early Childhood Education, Woodring College of Education
- Susan Johnson, Director, Early Learning, OSPI
- David Matteson, Consultant, Early Learning, NWESD 189
- Sheila Clark, kindergarten teacher, Happy Valley Elementary School
- Susan Plummer, kindergarten teacher, Roosevelt Elementary School
- Debora Haney, preschool teacher, Alderwood Elementary School
- Cheryl Isaacs, preschool teacher, Northern Heights Elementary School
- Paula McGrath, kindergarten teacher, Parkview Elementary School
- Nicole Talley, Geneva Elementary School interim assistant principal
- Nancy Smith, teacher on special assignment;
- Sue Thomas, Director, Special Education
- Gina Nye, preschool teacher, Happy Valley Elementary School
- Karin Otterholt, kindergarten teacher, Roosevelt Elementary School
- Greg Baker, Superintendent
- Tanya Rowe, Director, Communications and Community Relations
- Tom Venable, incoming Deputy Superintendent/Principal, Carl Cozier Elementary School
- Nora Klewiada, Executive Director, Human Resources
- Ron Cowan, Assistant Superintendent, Business and Operations
- Doug Kyles, Executive Director, School Administration



- q) Early learning teaches how to be safe; self control; to be clean is to be healthy; how to make good choices; how to trust adults and the learning environment; how to be a friend; internal focus of control; asse

- d) Schools don't have to teach lifelong and life-wide learning concepts alone. Schools can "leverage" the work of other community agencies. (E-3)
- e) Some push for cultural responsiveness sensitivity. Definitions of success differ culturally.
- f) How do we hold these outcomes collectively across cultures?
- g) How do we support middle school boys of color in middle years? How do we support them in re-engaging support for teachers and staff?
- h) What facilitates the belief students have in themselves?
- i) Alderwood: Child – "Why is this Cheeto salad?" Teacher – "This is a carrot, not a Cheeto."
- j) Early childhood and early parenthood go hand in hand. Helping the parents be supportive with parenting classes enhances education opportunities for the child.
- k) We have a list of value statements that don't incorporate early childhood development.
- l) We have a foot in each school but other than the PTA there is no support for families.
- m) Health clinics at schools would be a supportive part of early childhood development.
- n) This is the time for brain development.

What do you recommend as our next step(s) in visioning for preschool/early childhood education?

- a) Begin with a small work group that aligns with attainable steps. Let's take the next steps to begin a process to plan how to make this happen.
- b) Continued communication with partners.
- c) New kindergarten teachers need professional development now. Need to continue professional development, especially with High Scope.
- d) Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten staffed collaboration time together.
- e) Why don't we register children at birth? Why wait until kindergarten? Invite them early to be involved with schools.
- f) For E-2, we need to support teachers in making arts with time with specialists. If not time with a specialist, then sure teachers have professional development to provide art, music, etc.
  - a. Need technology equality among schools. Don't make teachers go through hoops. Provide them with digital cameras and document cameras, as needed.
- g) World language can be challenging for a non-English speaker. If a student is a Spanish speaker, then their 2<sup>nd</sup> language could be Spanish (Mandarin). Need to be flexible.
- h) We used to have a district administrator who was a link between the teachers and the District. When we lost her, the teachers lost their voice. We need an administrator who provides this link.
- i) We must work with families more than we currently do. We send things home, but we need more than that.
- j) The District needs to go to the parents, to their homes. Don't expect they will come to us.
- k) Hold events at churches, boys/girls club, homes—places other than schools.
- l) We need support to help accelerate learning.
- m) Need more than just full-day kindergarten. Some children will need more support.
- n) The District is waking up to the rich, comprehensive early learning community they are surrounded by. How can they build this connection to close the opportunity gap?

- o) Bellingham School District can be a leader in this partnership.
- p) A little step could be to align curriculum and connect professionals.
- q)

- n) Parents need support as children move to full-time kindergarten.
- o) Every parent wants the best for their child. Teach them how to learn and love and play with their child.
- p) Mentors for young children provide an important way to learn.
- q) Every child needs to have areas where they excel and where they are challenged.
- r)