

Summary of Community Linkage Meeting: November 16, 2010

Exploring the Impact of School Schedules on Academic Achievement

(Policy E-2)

The School Board welcomed parents from 12 of the 14 elementary schools in the district: Alderwood parent Israel Hidalgo; Birchwood parent Jennifer McAuley; Carl Cozier parent Sara Knies; Columbia parent Rachel Greenwood; Geneva parent Danielle Burnett; Happy Valley parent George Dauber; Larrabee parent Barry Arps; Lowell parent Anne Welsh; Northern Heights parent Piper Fowler; Parkview parent Darcy Riggins-Schmidt; Roosevelt parent Elizabeth Boyle; Wade King parent Sara Swetish.

School Board President Dr. Ken Gass introduced the other Board members and stated that the purpose of these community linkages is to determine if the district goals are being met. The focus of this linkage is on elementary school schedules and their effect on academic achievement. Dr. Gass asked Superintendent Baker to give an overview of the changes made to elementary school schedules last year. Dr. Baker stated we went from three different end times to one common end time. Pushing back the start time to 9:30 a.m. also allowed for a decrease in the number of bus runs. Another major component of the decision was based on teacher contractual planning time needed as well as equitable PE and music specialist offerings at each school.

During the meeting, parents talked about their experiences with the current elementary school program and expressed their hopes for the future. The parents described what a rigorous and enriched K-5 curriculum would look like in terms of what their children have gained and lost due to recent elementary school schedules changes, including instruction from specialists, that have been implemented this year in response to budget reductions.

Major topics of discussion included the kindergarten schedule with parents expressing concerns that the previous half-day, every day schedule was too short for optimal learning and the present full-day, every other day schedule leaves long learning gaps, especially in weeks of conferences or teaching learning days.

Parents also discussed that the current elementary school schedule is challenging for young children who are early risers and for working parents, and also discussed transportation issues. The Board also listened to parents' support for physical education, music, library, technology and world language as some of the specialty offerings for elementary students.