

**VIBRANT SCHOOLS TACOMA COALITION  
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING THREE PAGE BRIEF FOR MARCH 24, 2016:**

**THE VIBRANT THREE:  
TOP THREE PRIORITY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS  
(ALSO IN THE BODY OF THE REPORT).**

- 1) *Vibrant Schools would be interested in a needs-based assessment building a rationale for the Jason Lee Academy and is also interested in how the program will further equity and access for youth of color and those impacted by poverty.***
- 2) *Will the new school within a school displace natural Jason Lee students and redirect resources to students who do not live in the current service area? The coalition would like this to be tracked over time.***
- 3) *Vibrant Schools is interested in the nature of the data that will be accessible based on the findings of the climate survey.***

**VIBRANT SCHOOLS TACOMA COALITION  
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING THREE PAGE BRIEF FOR MARCH 24, 2016:**

**TOPICS AND ISSUES**

**1. Wainwright Delays and Parental Responses**

Staff explained the reasons for delays in construction at Wainwright school site which was driven by soil remediation (Asarco plume impacts), the large amount of rainfall, the shortage of subcontractors and delays in procuring materials. Parents who testified were universally critical over the decision to place students originally designated for the new Wainwright in the basement spaces of Whittier due to water leakages and overcrowded conditions. Several school board members raised concerns around the lack of parental input around the decision balanced by the need to make building decisions that are fiscally sound and stay in budget.

**2. Minority Contractors**

Patrick Hughes of the Hughes Group was there to represent contractors of color. An agreement has been reached and signed, that includes goals and measures for minority contractor inclusion. Nathaniel Hartley and Grover Johnson spoke about this during public comment.

***Follow Up: Vibrant Schools applauds this commitment and believes that It will be important for the contractors to track the statistics that demonstrate inclusion.***

### 3. Superintendent's Report

Enrollment for the first ninth grade class at Industrial Design, Engineering and Arts (IDEA) is now complete. No demographic or geographic data were provided for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment. The Jason Lee Academy will be a school within a school and the district plans to flex enrollment policies for students outside Jason Lee's service boundaries for this Academy. The program will also take part-time off campus home students.

#### School Board Questions:

Director Ushka asked for special education student data and Director Cobb asked for the timeline for completing staff hiring.

#### Vibrant Schools Question:

**1) *Vibrant Schools would be interested in a needs-based assessment building a rationale for the Jason Lee Academy and is also interested in how the program will further equity and access for youth of color and those impacted by poverty.***

**2) *Will the new school within a school displace natural Jason Lee students and redirect resources to students who do not live in the current service area? The coalition would like this to be tracked over time.***

### 4. Climate Survey

Dr Jennifer Kubista, Director of Student Life, reported on the new climate survey. developed by the Center for Educational Effectiveness.

Director Cobb asked what parents will see in the way of reported out data once the surveys are done and compiled.

**Clarification: *It was not clear if Director Cobb's question was fully answered, Vibrant Schools is also interested in the nature of the data that will be accessible based on the findings of the climate survey.***

#### Other School Board Questions and Responses:

Director Heinze said that the District wants to own what it needs to do. President Vialle asked if the District was getting a good cross-section of responses, since self-selecting to fill it out might result in skewing of data.

Dr. Kubista responded that the number of responses (staff, students, parents) is being tallied. It was not clear from the response if a tally of other demographic categories such as race, families representing ELL (English Language Learners (ELL) and other categories would be tallied in the report.

**5. Curriculum and Instruction.**

Library books for school libraries are being purchased. Director Cobb asked if the book selections were taking into account cultural groups and relevancy. Staff responded that cultural relevancy was a factor in the selection of books

**6. Other Topics:** (See Full Report for More Detail)

- Attendance tracking systems
- Six new principals were introduced to the Board
- Seismic improvements at the Broadway and 9<sup>th</sup> space
- Artificial turf replacement and concerns around materials used
- Concluding board comments

**VIBRANT SCHOOLS CALL FOR ACTION:** None at This Time

## **Vibrant Schools Tacoma Coalition School Board: Full Report**

**March 24, 2016**

---

All five Board members were present. Superintendent Carla Santorno was present, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Josh Garcia was not present. Student Reps Bernante and Olson were not present.

### **Recognitions:**

Salishan Community Health Advocates (SCHA) were recognized for their work on the East Side with families served by eastside schools in Salishan Community including Lister and Roosevelt Elementary Schools. SCHA was given the District's Gold Star Partner Award for March.

### **Members of the Public Addressing the Board.**

Several Wainwright parents addressed the Board about the recently-announced delays in construction at Wainwright, which will mean that the school will not open for students in Fall of 2016 but rather will open by second semester in early 2017. The staff explanation for the delays included the time needed for careful soil remediation (Asarco plume impacts), the large amount of rainfall, the shortage of subcontractors as the economy heats up, and delays in procuring materials.

The staff considered several temporary options, including busing Grades 4, 5 and 6 to a vacant space at Hunt; putting portables at the Professional Development Center near Skyline elementary; and placing the students at Whittier in the basement and other currently under-utilized space.

School Board Director Debbie Winskil asked if parents would really be willing to put their kids in the basement space, once they looked at it. She indicated that she believes that Hunt would be a better alternative and asked if staff had met with parents. School Board Director Scott Heinze urged staff to engage families before decisions are made. Board President Karen Vialle pointed out that the District has many schools to build and that the Board needs to be good stewards of the Bond funds, so there needs to be a fiscally sound solution. School Board Director Andrea Cobb asked about families' primary concerns and asked if these families had been approached to provide this information.

Six Wainwright parents/grandparents testified. Several parents indicated that the information presented to the Board regarding delays was new information, not previously available. Collectively these parents stated that 700 students would not fit at Whittier. Some characterized Whittier as overcrowded already, with the lunchroom situation already dire. All decried the lack of communication from the District, saying that parents' time was wasted, that the District had provided no warning of the delay and that this showed disrespect to the City of Fircrest and the public infrastructure. Most of the parents supported busing the students to Hunt or Skyline. None supported the Whittier option and all were negative about the use of the basement for student space, indicating the space had water leakages and was in poor condition.

Trade union leaders representing minority contractors then testified about the need for the District to include them in their construction contracting. The District has just signed an agreement to do this (see below).

**Superintendent's Report.** The Superintendent's report covered the new innovative IDEA (Industrial Design, Engineering and Arts) school and the innovative fitness-related program being developed at Jason Lee. Enrollment for the first ninth grade class at IDEA is now complete. No demographic or geographic data were provided for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment.

**Question:** *Vibrant Schools would be interested in a needs-based assessment building a rationale for the Jason Lee Academy and is also interested in how the program will further equity and access for youth of color and those impacted by poverty.*

Director Ushka asked for special education student data and Director Cobb asked for the timeline for completing staff hiring.

The Jason Lee Academy will be a school within a school and the district plans to flex enrollment policies for students outside Jason Lee's service boundaries for this Academy. The program will also take part-time off campus home students.

**Question:** *Vibrant Schools recognizes that one of the questions is whether the new school within a school will displace natural Jason Lee students and redirect resources to students who do not live in the current service area. The coalition would like this to be tracked over time.*

**Climate survey.** Dr Jennifer Kubista, Director of Student Life, reported on the new climate survey. The version in use was developed by the Center for Educational Effectiveness, a group who has been doing this work for about 16 years.

Director Cobb asked what parents will see in the way of reported out data once the surveys are done and compiled. Dr Kubista responded that the data is on the web site as part of the strategic plan reporting.

**Clarification:** It was not clear if Director Cobb's question was fully answered, *Vibrant Schools is also interested in the nature of the data that will be accessible based on the findings of the climate survey.*

Director Heinze said that the District wants to own what it needs to do. President Vialle asked if the District was getting a good cross-section of responses, since self-selecting to fill it out might result in skewing of data.

Dr. Kubista responded that the number of responses (staff, students, parents) is being tallied. It was not clear from the response if a tally of other demographic categories such as race, families representing ELL (English Language Learners (ELL) and other categories would be tallied in the report.

**New Principals.** A number of new Principals were introduced, and each expressed excitement at being in Tacoma. The new Principals included:

- Kristy Emrine—Lister Elementary (Kate Frazier is going to Jenny Reed)
- Regina Rainbolt—Skyline Elementary
- Josh Zarling—NE Tacoma
- Lisa Boyd—Pt Defiance Elementary
- Taj Jensen—Mann Elementary
- Zach Farnell—Co-Director, IDEA

There were no Policy Matters. The Financial report is on the District web site (it is reported at the Board meeting quarterly).

**Community Inclusion Agreement.** Patrick Hughes of the Hughes Group was there to represent contractors of color who wish to contract with the District on the many construction projects the District is carrying out. An agreement has been reached and signed, that includes goals and measures for minority contractor inclusion. Nathaniel Hartley and Grover Johnson spoke about this during public comment.

**Follow Up.** *Vibrant Schools applauds this commitment and believes that it will be important for the contractors to track the statistics that demonstrate inclusion.*

**Curriculum and Instruction.** Library books are being purchased for school libraries. Director Cobb asked if the book selections were taking into account cultural groups and relevancy. Staff responded that cultural relevancy was a factor in the selection of books. Director Winskill asked if individual librarians make the choices to which staff responded affirmatively. Director Winskill also asked about the philosophy of selecting reading strategies. Ms Verhaar offered a detailed response that Director Winskill appreciated.

**Business Matters.** Covered the time and attendance tracking system for staff which is proving to taking longer and costing more than expected. Director Winskill expressed frustration about this and asked how it will be avoided in the future. Since time and attendance practices are not standardized across union groups, each union has different time and attendance requirements.

The 9<sup>th</sup> and Broadway space will need seismic improvements. The technology equity initiatives total \$14 million and involve replacing many laptops which will be reconditioned and provided to students.

Artificial turf will be replaced at Lincoln, Mt Tahoma, Stewart, Wainwright and McCarver. Director Heinze expressed strong concern about crumb rubber and its possible toxic effects. The Department of Health says there is not evidence yet that there is a problem (including lymphoma in younger children). Director Heinze that he was concerned about being on the wrong side of this issue by continuing to install rubber crumb based artificial turf fields. Director Cobb asked if the technology were better now.

The strategic plan report was deferred to the next meeting since Deputy Superintendent Josh Garcia was not present.

**Board comments.**

- Director Heinze noted that community support is “overwhelming” with more than 200 community partners.
- Director Cobb commented on the “early bonding” being done with IDEA students and asked if this will be done in all schools with all kids.
- Director Ushka commented on Write 253 and Louder Than a Bomb
- Director Winskill had no report
- President Vialle noted that Tacoma presented at the Microsoft K-12 data summit.

**Upcoming Board meetings:**

- April 14 regular meeting
- April 21 study session on construction plans for Mary Lyon Elementary, Browns Point Elementary
- April 28 regular meeting