

Information Technology Advisory Committee

October 21, 2019 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

Room 2750, John Stanford Center

2445 3rd Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98134



Meeting Notes

Call to Order

JoLynn Berge called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. Roll call is as follows:

- Committee Members Present: Avery Wagar, Elizabeth Ebersole, Nina Arens, Marcello Benati, Charnjit Dhoot, Peter Lee, Molly Meck, James Wagar, Brian Vance, Marika Wong, Christine Billroth, Carla Rogers
- Committee Members Absent: TuesD Chambers, Jacob Marzynski, Tu Dang, Roy Zimmermann
- Other Staff Present: Chief Financial Officer JoLynn Berge, Information Security Manager April Mardock, Senior Administrative Assistant Joe Valenti, Digital Learning Manager Rafael Gallardo, Director of Enterprise Applications and Data Services Nancy Petersen, Senior Advisor to the Superintendent Sherri Kokx

Committee members introduced themselves during roll call.

Committee members unanimously accepted the proposed agenda.

Committee members accepted the September 16, 2019 meeting minutes.

Introduction of new Executive Director of Technology Services

Chief Financial Officer JoLynn Berge introduced Carlos Del Valle as the new Executive Director of Technology Services, with a start date of November 12, 2019. Mr. Del Valle introduced himself and provided background stating he had spent 19 years with the Air Force and was excited to be part of Seattle Schools.

DoTS Budget Review

Ms. Berge began by speaking to some items that committee members had asked for follow up for from the last meeting including adding budget percentage columns that displayed what part of the total amount of individual levy spending they accounted for as well as listing some major projects that were encompassed within each budget category. Ms. Berge continued, explaining that the overspend shown on some individual line items discussed during the last meeting were due to transfers related to end of year closeout processes that hadn't occurred yet. Ms. Berge then spoke to the 2018-19 Technology budget highlighting the BTA IV budget and the safety and security and student learning categories. Ms. Berge concluded by providing a brief overview of remaining funds in each of the different levy buckets before stating that unlike Capital funds, the General fund balance is not carried forward.

Ms. Berge reviewed the 2019-20 Technology budget noting the figures estimated how much was expected to be spent in the current year, highlighting the BEX IV category, specifically the classroom technology line item. Ms. Berge continued, informing the committee that the fiscal year had just began September 1st before introducing the topic of nominating a Co-Chair for the committee. Nina Arens nominated Pauline Amell Nash for Co-Chair and James Wagar seconded.

Ms. Berge introduced Senior Advisor to the Superintendent, Sherri Kokx, adding that one of the main purposes of the committee was to inform the district on data and technology needs in support of the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan Presentation

Ms. Kokx began the presentation by stating that Superintendent Juneau had begun her tenure with a listen and learn tour that included 21 total stops allowing her to engage with different groups throughout the city to gather their hopes and dreams for the students of Seattle Public Schools. Ms. Kokx continued, adding that a group of staff and community members worked together with a consultant to use that information to formulate the district's Strategic Plan.

Ms. Kokx provided an overview of the Strategic Plan's mission and vision statement, highlighting the district's commitment to eliminating opportunity gaps and ensuring access to an excellent education for every student. Ms. Kokx continued, providing an overview of the Plan's Theory of Action (TOA). Ms. Kokx stated that she believed the technology advisory committee could help in identifying and allocating resources strategically through a racial equity framework to provide students a high-quality education. Peter Lee asked if there was a definition of racial equity to which Ms. Kokx responded that the TOA was grounded in the principal of Targeted Universalism before adding that the TOA was focused on African American males who under the current broken system were most adversely affected. Ms. Kokx continued, stating that it was up to Leadership to address how best to serve all students given the structural racism that still existed in today's educational structure.

Targeted Universalism Video

Ms. Kokx gave an overview of the 4 Strategic Plan Priorities and each subsequent goal aligned to each. Ms. Kokx stated that two of the initiatives the district was focused on was students of color furthest from educational justice reading at grade level by 3rd grade and students of color furthest from educational justice feeling safe and welcome at their schools as a result of a culturally responsive workforce. In support of the reading initiative, Ms. Kokx revealed the Seattle Super Readers program as well as a targeted approach focused on 13 schools that hold over 50% of African American males in K-3 as a way of allocating resources towards those groups furthest from educational justice. Additionally, Ms. Kokx stated that the result of creating a positive and culturally responsive environment and structure in those schools would lead to successful practices that would hopefully be replicated and amplified throughout the district.

Marcello Benati asked if generational African Americans and Somalians were being included with Ms. Kokx responding yes, before Ms. Berge mentioned that students who identified as two or more races were not included. Ms. Kokx stated that the students who would be categorized as those furthest from educational justice included Latinx, Southeast Asian, Native, African American, and Pacific Islanders before mentioning that this approach was meant to be viewed through an asset-based lens, concluding that it was up to teachers and staff to use the information learned and grow best practices for universal application.

Ms. Kokx stated that the Department of African American Male Achievement had been started and was achieving assistance from the Oakland School District regarding that work. James Wagar asked if there was a specific Seattle Public Schools definition of Educational Justice. Ms. Kokx referred to the Strategic Plan and responded that it was available on the district website. Ms. Berge noted the connection between ITAC, its purpose and the Strategic Plan, asking how opportunity gaps could be addressed through tools and supports by way of technology. Ms. Berge followed up adding that professional development, instructional supports, and device allocation would be priorities the committee could focus on with the goal of supporting the Strategic Plan. Liz Ebersole responded that the district couldn't assume that students were receiving educational instruction at home citing examples of students not being familiar with certain forms and skillsets of technology in the classroom including keyboarding. Molly Meck added that integrated practice and empowering kids to use technology for good was also essential in making them feel comfortable using technology.

Ms. Ebersole inquired about some schools asking for contributions for programs intended to help students read at home, adding not all schools were participating and how that inconsistency impacted learning gaps among students. Ms. Berge responded that individual school and classroom initiatives were happening and that when there are gaps in curriculum and training, homegrown programs tend to pop up versus resetting and establishing a district-wide baseline curriculum and standards. Ms. Meck added that she was not a fan of accelerated reader programs due to the inequities created as a result and instead preferred teaching students how to use technology tools to illustrate their learning from as early as kindergarten. Ms. Meck continued, adding that in order to use technology as intended, feedback and ideas would need to be shared amongst staff and teachers, leading to an alignment with current curriculum. In response, Ms. Berge acknowledged while the intention was positive, asking families to contribute funds towards said programs did factor into the inequities the district faced.

Nina Arens asked if the Strategic Plan mentioned anything specifically regarding technology and its role in Seattle's legacy to which Ms. Kokx replied no. Ms. Arens responded that she thought the committee could help address how Seattle is viewed via the Strategic Plan and expressed discouragement that the Plan didn't take ownership or recognize the role technology has played in the city's history. Ms. Kokx replied that the Strategic Plan was written and finalized, however expressed that technology would play an important role in how the plan is implemented and how it will ensure its success. Ms. Berge added that technology is recognized as a large component of Seattle and Seattle Public Schools as demonstrated by its large presence in the Capital Levies. Ms. Berge continued adding that the current BTA IV and upcoming BEX V levy's featured substantial commitments to improving the technological infrastructure and supports for all Seattle schools.

In response to Ms. Arens highlighting the fact that the district didn't have a theory of action around technology, and what it would look like if technology was a driving force in support of the district's vision, Rafael Gallardo said there was a multi-year plan that involved both leadership and teachers in leveraging existing resources to provide adequate support to students. Ms. Berge added that levy planning for BTA V was coming up in the coming months, which would also have a big impact on the vision of the district in relation to technology allocation.

Brian Vance asked what the committee could do to help integrate the use of technology in the schools, mentioning that he would like to be able to bring back strategies and reasons to his school to share with teachers on why they need to change the way they are teaching to help students realize the role technology plays in their lives. Ms. Meck mentioned that she had heard the district was phasing out iPads, noting a big disconnect between the technology department and what is happening at the schools. Ms. Meck continued, saying there was not enough support and that in order to address the disconnect the role of ITAC needed to be aligned with the decisions of the John Stanford Center and interests of the schools.

Marika Wong stated that she worked in Assistive Technology and had noticed some staff were reluctant in using technology in part because there was not a consistent message around how technology would be used to accomplish goals and enable our students to become 21st century learners. Ms. Wong concluded her remarks expressing concern that departments weren't on the same page including Technology Services, Instructional Technology, and Special Education.

James Wagar stated that he didn't notice any underlying principles in the Strategic Plan that guided what and how technology tools would be applied to different situations including deployments, etc. and that that would be a potential area of improvement the committee could help address. In response, Ms. Arens stated that as a committee with community representatives, ITAC did have a strong influence on the direction of technology in Seattle Schools especially with the School Board. Pauline Amell Nash stated that she believed technology was approached as the tool in which goals were achieved by way of the different methods and measures being used, suggesting a possible opportunity to work on those specific initiatives in smaller work groups. In response, Ms. Berge stated that there were some work groups already formed in support of third grade reading and college and career readiness.

Ms. Berge mentioned an opportunity for the committee to potentially impact a policy brought forth by a Board member regarding device usage in the classroom. Ms. Berge added that the committee could submit a recommendation or issue a statement regarding device usage before asking April Mardock, Information Security Manager to share additional details about the aforementioned policy. Ms. Mardock explained that the proposed changes to Board Policy 2022, Electronic Use Policy included potentially prohibiting students from using personal devices on the district's guest network citing a distraction in class before mentioning that it would be a good idea for the committee to discuss their position on limiting student's access to personal devices while in class.

Ms. Ebersole asked how the committee could be better informed of news and decisions discussed regarding technology before it was too late. Ms. Berge responded that Board Director Rick Burke, not staff, had brought the proposed revisions to Policy 2022 forth. Ms. Berge added that she thought it was appropriate for the committee to have a voice in this policy discussion and offered to reach out to the sponsoring Board Director to ask that the committee's voice and expertise be considered before moving forward with any changes. Ms. Mardock mentioned that former Chief Kyle Kinoshita had started work in evaluating Board Policy 2022 but that it was limited to electronic curriculum, not devices. Ms. Arens expressed discouragement that the policy hadn't been discussed previously, while adding that one of the main reasons for forming an advisory committee on technology was to gather diverse perspectives on how technology could be leveraged throughout the district.

Mr. Wagar brought forth a motion to have Ms. Berge draft an email to Director Burke expressing the committee's desire to be included in on potential revisions to Board Policy 2022 adding that the committee could help in playing an important role in formulating a policy recommendation. The motion was seconded. Ms. Ebersole asked if there were any other committee meetings or work sessions that ITAC members could attend with Ms. Berge mentioning that Director Burke was on both the Executive and Curriculum and Instruction Committees. In response to the Board Action Report regarding the policy change mentioning that ITAC was consulted, Mr. Wagar stated that last year the committee participated in a survey to Dr. Kinoshita, with Ms. Ebersole adding that the survey was about personal use of student devices during class. Ms. Wong responded that the Board Action Report regarding potential policy changes was misrepresentative of what the survey asked adding that the results of the survey were never shared with ITAC.

Ms. Ebersole suggested any committee members that could speak during the public testimony portion of the Board meeting should do so, citing the influence such a platform could have on Board members. Mr. Wagar mentioned informal accommodations some schools use when teaching students with 504 plans, expressing discomfort at that the idea that a top down policy might take away that opportunity from some schools and programs.

Ms. Berge mentioned proposed changes to the Committee Charge asking Joe Valenti to provide an overview of the edits. Mr. Valenti stated the following edits: Changing the title of Chief Information Officer to Executive Director of Technology Services, and adding a third student representative bringing the total number of committee members to 19 from 18. Ms. Ebersole made the motion to forward the proposed changes to the Executive committee with the committee membership seconding the motion.

Open Comment

Ms. Amell Nash asked about the potential to join work groups focused on supporting the Strategic Plan. Ms. Berge responded that the committee could volunteer to join existing work groups focused on engagement. Ms. Wong asked about receiving an update about the laptop 1:1 deployment as well as the school grant proposal in future committee meetings with Ms. Berge agreeing.

Marcello Benati asked if the committee could set a recommendation of guidelines for donation of hardware during a refresh cycle. Ms. Mardock responded that the district did have a standardized list of supported hardware for donations. Mr. Benati followed up highlighting that

major technology companies match donations made to schools in both time and hardware during the holiday season and to make sure PTA's and schools were aware of those programs. Mr. Vance inquired about the district's technology standards and where they fit into the overall work the district was doing and how it connected with ITAC and Strategic Plan. Mr. Benati added that low cost internet was also something schools could take advantage of with Rafael Gallardo, Digital Learning Manager saying the district had been looking into the city's offerings. Mr. Valenti provided a brief update regarding implicit bias training for committee members mentioning that he was waiting for a link from the Department of Race Equity Advancement to provide to ITAC. Ms. Amell Nash asked that the committee discuss the training in person in order to maximize its teachings with Ms. Berge asking that committee members come prepared to discuss it at the December meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Next Meeting

Monday, November 18, 2019