



DRAFT



DEEL LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

MINUTES

Members Present: Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis, Saadia Hamid, Council President Bruce Harrell, Ruth Kagi, Larry Nyland, Erin Okuno, Shouan Pan, Kevin Washington, Greg Wong.

LOC Members Absent: Hueiling Chan, Sandi Everlove, Allison Wood.

Others Present: Dwane Chappelle (DEEL), Jolenta Coleman (DEEL), Brian Goodnight (Council Central Staff), Donnie Grabowski (DEEL), Dana Harrison (DEEL), Monica Liang-Aguirre (DEEL), Pegi McEvoy (SPS), Kaetlin Miller (PHSKC), Waslala Miranda (CBO), Ben Noble (CBO), Long Phan (DEEL), Sara Rigel (PHSKC), Sue Rust (DEEL), Sid Sidorowicz (DEEL), Anna-Maria Vag (Gatewood PTA Legislative Chair), Jessica Knaster Wasse (PHSKC).

Dwane Chappelle greeted everyone and called the meeting to order. The minutes from March 14, 2017 were approved.

On Tuesday, May 9, the Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) considered the Mayor's request that \$2.3 million of underspent Families and Education Levy funds be used to support the Seattle Public Schools' proposal to move to a two-tier bus and bell time schedule. Section 6 of Ordinance 123567 requires that the Executive seek the recommendation of the LOC prior to submitting any proposed changes to Levy funding that must be approved by ordinance by City Council.

The LOC received a three-part presentation on the issue. City Budget Office Director Ben Noble discussed the City's financial situation and noted that, at this time, no excess funds are available for this one-time request. He specifically referenced the School Safety Traffic and Pedestrian Improvement Fund, noting that there are enough funds for the District's request for the City to take on responsibility for the Crossing Guards program. However, there are not enough funds available for the bus schedule change. Because the Levy has been underspent for several reasons, funds are available that would be best used for a one-time request. The City is not prepared to fund proposals that would create an ongoing expense.

Dr. Maida Lynn Chen, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Washington, presented the science behind the request for two tier school starts. Pegi McEvoy, SPS Assistant Superintendent for Operations, presented the history of bell time changes by SPS, along with the most recent efforts at Community Engagement and Outreach.

Seven public LOC members were present, along with SPS Superintendent Nyland and City Councilmember Harrell. Overall, committee members accepted and supported the District's

rationale for moving to the proposed two tier bell time. However, there were many questions and concerns about the use of Levy funds for this purpose. Generally, concerns were:

1. Levy funds are strategically directed at achieving specific and measurable improvements in academic results. This accountability structure is a fundamental strength of the Levy. The SPS request essentially is an ask for the City to fund a general transportation need for the District because it has a budget shortfall. The levy has never been used as a general grant-making fund that responds to unsolicited proposals regardless of their merit.
2. Levy funds are directed toward closing the academic opportunity gap. Schools and students targeted for Levy investments need support to improve outcomes for struggling students. This focus on equity is important to the LOC. The SPS request is not targeted in this way and addresses equality, but not equity, in transportation needs. Significantly, the groups that most benefit from later start times (teens) are already on a later bell schedule, and the majority of low-income schools are on appropriate bell schedules. It is unclear who benefits from this specific \$2.3 million grant and how it actually would result in reduced academic opportunity gaps.
3. The opportunity costs of using Levy funds for transportation need to be considered. LOC members believe underspent funds could be put to use in ways that would more effectively address opportunity gaps, such as by investing directly in the schools that already are working to achieve Levy goals, even if the funding were limited to one-time expenses.

After discussion, the LOC members were asked to state their recommendations. Four recommended that Levy funds not be used for this purpose, while three recommended that the proposal be moved forward. At a minimum, LOC members asked that SPS return to present the results of this change, and how it has affected student behavior and outcomes. Results should be disaggregated by students' characteristics.

The agenda for the meeting also included discussion of the Families and Education Levy mid-year report. Because time for the meeting had expired, Sid Sidorowicz noted that the members of the LOC had copies of the mid-year report in their packets that they could review.

D. Chappelle thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.