

EVERETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EVERETT, WASHINGTON

The Board of Directors of Everett Public Schools, Snohomish County, Washington, held a regular Board meeting on Tuesday, April 28, 2009, beginning at 4:30 p.m., in the Board Room of the Educational Service Center, 4730 Colby Avenue, Everett, Washington. Those in attendance were: Carol Andrews, Sue Cooper, Kristie Dutton, Karen Madsen and Ed Petersen.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

President Cooper called for any changes to the agenda. Interim Superintendent Karst Brandsma reported that there would be a revised Personnel Report. In addition, Mr. Brandsma requested the addition of a revised Item 7b (Resolution 939—Adoption of 2009-2010 Reduced Educational Program). With that, Carol Andrews moved for adoption of the revised agenda. Ed Petersen seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**ADOPTION OF
AGENDA**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kristie Dutton moved to adopt the minutes of the regular meeting of April 14, 2009. Karen Madsen seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES**

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

Mr. Brandsma said the High School Art Show awards ceremony took place following the Board meeting on April 14. He displayed some of the winning pieces from that show. The artist whose piece received the "Best of Show" was in attendance at tonight's meeting. She is Jessica Leighton, a student at Cascade High School. Her instructor, Ann Morgan, was also in attendance. Her artwork is a sculpture entitled, "After VanGogh." Jessica and Ann commented briefly. President Cooper extended congratulations on behalf of the Board and said it was pleasure to see the artwork, meet the artists, and see the families and teachers who support the artists.

**SUPT'S
COMMENTS**

Next, Mr. Brandsma reported that the Interscholastic Athletic Administration publishes a magazine four times per year. In the spring 2009 edition is the first installment of highlights from the NIAAA (National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association) Blue Ribbon Panel conducted at the 2008 National Conference of High School Athletic Directors. Director of Athletics Robert Polk is one of the five-member panel and is quoted in the article. Copies of the article will be supplied to the Board.

Recently, Mr. Brandsma met with some members of the Jackson High School staff to applaud their exemplary efforts and present them with special coins that he distributes sparingly. JHS principal Terry Cheshire said the staff appreciated the recognition. Mr. Brandsma also reported that he presented coins to the members of the Diversity Task Force.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

**PUBLIC
COMMENT**

RECOGNITION OF RETIREES

None.

**RECOGNITION OF
RETIREES**

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Administration provided information on the status of the AVID programs at North Middle School and Everett High School with a special focus on plans for expanding AVID electives and student participation in the fall of 2009 at Cascade and Sequoia High Schools (E:175/09). Chief Academic Officer Terry Edwards opened the

**REPORT—AVID
(Advancement Via
Individual
Determination)
PROGRAMS**

discussion, followed by JoAnne Fabian (AVID District Director), Kelly Shepherd (principal of North Middle School), Kelly Clapp (assistant principal of Everett High School), Cathy Woods (principal of Cascade High School), and Sally Lancaster (principal of Sequoia High School). Following a PowerPoint presentation, they talked about the definition of AVID; its mission; students involved in AVID; the impact of AVID on students, staff and schools; AVID professional development; focus on rigor; create a college-going culture; and WICR (writing/inquiry/collaboration/reading). Cathy and Sally talked about plans to expand the program to Cascade and Sequoia next year.

**REPORT—AVID
(Advancement Via
Individual
Determination)
PROGRAMS
(cont'd.)**

Board member Petersen said he recently attended an AVID workshop at the NSBA convention and learned, among other things, that AVID is in over 4,000 middle schools and high schools in 45 states and 15 countries. The data was impressive—nationwide, just 21 percent of the students in the program are caucasian. Especially powerful was the statement that “Socio-economic status can be removed as a factor.” He went on to say he was impressed with today’s presentation. He said he is an avid AVID supporter. President Cooper said it is a program that seems to give hope to students, families and staff.

Financial reports as of March 31, 2009 were provided for the Board of Directors’ review (E:176/09). The reports include year-to-date information on revenues and expenditures, General Fund projections, a cash report and an investment summary. Director of Finance Jeff Moore said the report is similar to February’s. The projected ending fund balance is \$8.8 million, equal to approximately four percent.

**FINANCIAL
REPORTS**

ACTION ITEMS

Ed Petersen moved for approval of the revised Consent Agenda. Carol Andrews seconded the motion.

**CONSENT
AGENDA**

- 1) Personnel Report (revised) (E:177/09);
- 2) Voucher Lists (E:178/09);
- 3) Agreement Between Everett School District and Puget Sound Educational Service District 121 for an Online Standardized Elementary Report Card (E:179/09);
- 4) Agreement Between Everett School District and Northwest Educational Service District 189 for Educational Programs for Court-Adjudicated Students at Northwest Regional Learning Center (NWRLC) for the 2009-2010 School Year (E:180/09);
- 5) Agreement Between Everett School District and Snohomish Discovery Cooperative for the Continuation of Services for Special Education Students with Severe Behavior Disorders for the 2009-2010 School Year (E:181/09);
- 6) Final Acceptance: Everett Memorial Stadium Synthetic Turf Replacement (E:182/09);
- 7) Monetary Gift in the Amount of \$8,740 from View Ridge Elementary PTA to View Ridge Elem. School as Reimbursement for Assemblies and Field Trips (E:183/09).

The motion carried unanimously.

The Administration recommended the Board of Directors adopt Resolution 939—Adoption of 2009-2010 Reduced Educational Program (revised) (Res.21/09). The current financial crisis affecting the economy will also impact Everett Public Schools. The District Finance Office has projected a budget shortfall for the 2009-2010 school year of up to \$7.71 million. On March 24, 2009, at its regularly scheduled Board meeting, the Board of Directors directed the Superintendent to begin preparations for an educational reduction in program to meet the anticipated shortfall.

**RESOLUTION
939—ADOPTION
OF 2009-2010
REDUCED
EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAM
(revised)**

Setting school district budgets is universally more difficult than ever because of the financial challenges of the state and nation. To meet the district’s mission to educate each student, to protect the district’s financial stability and its capacity to meet our community’s expectations, we will:

- Continue our focus on each student's academic success
- Maintain class size goals
- Keep schools as safe places to learn and grow, and
- Adhere to state and federal laws and negotiated agreements

All budget considerations, no matter their difficulty, are being reviewed in light of the long-term financial capacity of Everett Public Schools to support its mission and meet community expectations.

Mr. Brandsma said, regrettably, he is bringing Resolution 939—Adoption of Reduced Educational Program, to the Board tonight. He read the resolution into the record and reviewed a PowerPoint presentation showing a budget deficit of \$7,710,000. He provided an overview of key dates during the budget process; shared a copy of the budget-setting guiding principles; and discussed reasons for the need to lay off teachers. He reviewed a list of the proposed reductions and results of an online survey (attached).

Board member Petersen sought clarification concerning the process. Board member Madsen commended the Administration for having the foresight to plan and work proactively to stave off these financial issues for a long time. She emphasized that these difficulties are not the fault of the Administration; none of us did anything to bring it on ourselves, nor do we or our kids deserve it. She expressed her sadness and regret about the whole situation. President Cooper concurred and said it is an extremely difficult set of circumstances and the Board appreciates the proactive efforts of the Administration and the thoroughness and thought that have gone into making these tough decisions, both with the small and the big items. The Board is hopeful that better times are coming and she thanked everyone for the work that has been done. Board member Dutton said we are all in this together, we will make it through this and will continue to do great work in Everett. She expressed her deep appreciation to staff. Board member Petersen said the District has had great success in recruiting quality, topnotch teachers to address the particular needs of our District and it is unfortunate that the hard work and great results that have been accomplished have been jeopardized. Hopefully, the District will be able to reclaim those wonderful teachers. Mr. Brandsma said the Administration will find ways to keep them busy in the substitute pool and, hopefully, bring them back as soon as possible.

The Board discussed holding a special meeting in early June to gather input from the community concerning the reduced educational program. It may follow the format of the special meetings held concerning school service area boundary adjustments whereby each Board member speaks one-on-one with individual speakers, thus offering an in-depth opportunity for conversation.

With no further discussion, Kristie Dutton moved to adopt the aforementioned regarding the Resolution 939—Adoption of 2009-2010 Reduced Educational Program (revised). Karen Madsen seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

BOARD COMMENTS

Board member Petersen said he and President Cooper, with the assistance of Mr. Brandsma, met with the editor and a reporter of *The Herald*. It was a very thorough and constructive discussion. President Cooper said part of the presentation was the information that Mr. Brandsma shared tonight. The representatives gained a better understanding of what the District will lose with these reductions. They appreciated getting the information. They offered good questions. Karst said it was time well spent.

Board member Petersen said he appreciated having the opportunity to attend the NSBA conference. Among the workshops the Board members attended was one about students maturing in the 21st century, living in the global village and competing in the global

RESOLUTION 939—ADOPTION OF 2009-2010 REDUCED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (revised) (cont'd.)

BOARD COMMENTS

marketplace. These are concepts to bring forward, engage the community and the teaching staff, leadership staff and parents and set the stage for some continuing planning. Board member Madsen said the District staff members have a hard job, but the Board has faith that the financial challenges can be met.

**BOARD
COMMENTS
(cont'd.)**

BOARD ACTION AND/OR BOARD DISCUSSION

President Cooper announced that as required by RCW 28A.505.210, the District must hold a public hearing annually on or before May 1 concerning the proposed use of student achievement funds for the upcoming school year (E:184/09). The public hearing was held at this time. With the levels of state funding still in question, this year's plan was presented as an overview of the concepts and percent of anticipated funding in each approved category. Any person may appear or provide written comment on the proposed use. First to speak was the District Administration represented by Terry Edwards and Jeff Moore. They reviewed a PowerPoint presentation and said the upcoming budget will cut 65 to 70 percent of the I-728 funding and will amount to \$3,028,304 (including carryover and subtracting indirects). They talked about the potential use of the funds which includes class size reduction, professional development, extended learning and early assistance.

**PUBLIC
HEARING—USE
OF STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT
FUNDS (I-728)**

Following the presentation by the Administration, President Cooper asked whether there was anyone in the audience wishing to testify regarding the proposed use of the student achievement funds. There was no oral or written testimony. Next, she asked whether there were any questions from the Board. Board member Petersen sought clarification about setting aside funds for the second year of the biennium.

President Cooper closed the public hearing at 6:50 p.m. and re-opened the regular meeting for Board discussion. Mr. Petersen said he is pleased that the District will be able to keep a cadre of facilitators.

The Administration held a study session concerning strategic planning for 2009-2010 (E:185/09). Deputy Superintendent Matt McCauley distributed a copy of the 2008-2009 Strategic Plan that includes feedback from those attending the Leadership Team meeting of April 9. He invited the Board to the May 7 Leadership Team meeting at which further discussion of the plan will take place. The meeting will follow a format similar to years past. A draft of the 2009-2010 Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board at the June 23 Board meeting for first reading. Karst encouraged the Board to provide input as soon as possible.

**STUDY SESSION—
STRATEGIC
PLANNING 2009-
2010**

Board member Madsen suggested compiling a list of places from which to draw comparison data across the years such as on-time graduation, drop-out rate, progress from grade to grade, attendance, completion of the CE, and others. Board member Petersen asked about incorporating recommendations from the Diversity Committee, to which Matt replied that a draft document is in process and it is anticipated that the Board will be presented with a recommendation in June. It is possible there will be a recommendation for items to be included in next year's Strategic Plan and some that are ongoing. Karst said the recommendations will be shared as soon as they are available. The committee members are excited about their work and want to do the very best job possible.

Board member Petersen asked whether the District has mined the opportunities to partner with entities that can better help children be school-ready for their first day of kindergarten, to which Terry said the District is working with another district on a state Lighthouse grant which is used to form partnerships with early childhood providers. There are also some early childhood pieces contained in the Strategic Plan.

STUDY SESSION— ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER

The Administration held a study session regarding the culminating exhibition's argumentative paper, including a discussion of different considerations around writing assessments at the high school level. Terry Edwards said the February results for COE submittals showed 150+ portfolios put forward, 93 percent approved, so 144 District seniors moved to mastery in mathematics. Eighty percent of District students who are moving towards graduation (in the graduating class) are at mastery in math—that is a very positive step.

The purpose of tonight's presentation was to talk about how the District is moving forward with the argumentative paper and why now is a pivotal time to make some determinations about how we treat the argumentative paper. He talked about the history of the argumentative paper, how things have changed in the District and began a conversation about whether it is time to change the graduation requirement for the argumentative paper; has it served its purpose and are we now ready to move on?

Joining Terry tonight were the high school principals Terry Cheshire (Jackson High School), Cathy Woods (Cascade High School), Sally Lancaster (Everett High School) and Catherine Matthews (Everett High School). Also present were Kelly Clapp (assistant principal at Everett High School), Don Lichty (assistant principal at Jackson High School), Steve Johnson (Jackson High School) and Ric Williams (Director of Curriculum & Assessment).

Terry said the argumentative paper dates back 13 years beginning with the Board adoption of the graduation requirement for the culminating exhibition (CE). Within the CE were several requirements: the argumentative paper (it was once called a scholarly paper); a plan for what the student will do in their 13th year (after they graduate from high school); a plan for how the student was going to do a project; the project itself; and a presentation. He described the District 13 years ago and said there was limited alignment of curriculum across the District at that time. He went on to talk about the evolution of the argumentative paper to a point eight years ago of asking the question, "How do we do a better job about teaching writing and how do we move writing out of the context of a classroom setting and make it a separate stand-alone graduation requirement?" The English departments and curriculum teams thought about the best way of scaffolding writing in order to lead up to the idea of argumentation. They asked, "What is it we really want kids to be able to do?" The answer: Students need to be able to take a position and then argue that position, citing credible evidence in a logical process. The crux of the argumentative paper is that we want students to use writing as a way of thinking. Since the inception of the idea of the argumentative paper as a stand-alone graduation requirement, we have seen the State adopt the writing WASL as a graduation requirement; we have implemented district-wide writing assessments at grades 9 & 10; we have done a great deal of work on curriculum alignment and developing writing rubrics, instructional rubrics and model lessons around argumentation and teachers have taken argumentation to heart and embedded it in the curriculum that they are teaching all the way from middle school through grade 10, coming into grade 11. This evening's discussion focused on whether the usefulness of the stand-alone graduation requirement and argumentative paper has served its purpose and is it time to think about it like we thought about the Info Tech requirement that we once had where it began as a typing requirement and moved to an Info Tech requirement. We came to where we were struggling with having students pass that stand-and-deliver requirement. When we surveyed students, we found they had the keyboarding skills, but they weren't demonstrating on the stand-and-deliver piece. As keyboarding was moved away as a stand-alone graduation requirement, the students still had those skills embedded in their other classes. In fact, students are engaged in more technology and more diverse classes now than when keyboarding was a requirement.

STUDY SESSION— ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER (cont'd.)

A lot of resources are expended to ‘chase’ the argumentative paper as a graduation requirement. A lot of resources and time are expended on the instructional side of argumentation and of writing in our classes, but this then serves as a stand-alone assessment—a third level assessment—for writing that students must produce in order to meet graduation. They must meet all standards in our instructional and scoring rubric in order to be judged ‘at standard’ even if they have produced other work throughout the years in English which shows they are ‘at standard.’ As it stands now, they must repeat all of those when the argumentative paper is a graduation requirement. Because it is such a high stakes requirement, a lot of class time is devoted to ‘the paper’ and a lot of time is spent on students who do not demonstrate mastery on ‘the paper’ and remediation of that. It costs about \$350 per student to remediate that student (or approximately \$11,000 to add a section) and takes away an elective for those youngsters that they might have been able to take that would have brought them forward into some other area of more passion for them.

Next, Ric Williams talked about work that has been done recently under the Strategic Plan and how the District has been working on aligning and articulating the writing curriculum and developing the instructional rubric for the argumentative paper in the last 15 months. Ric spoke to the continuous alignment of the argumentative paper. The argumentative paper was first introduced at 11th grade and was seen as the ‘junior research paper.’ With the advent of the middle school learning portfolio and improved writing skills in students, it became possible to move a lot of the 10th grade WASL focus down into the 9th grade. Beginning last year, a hard look was taken at where we were going with our District writing curriculum and it was decided to extend argumentation down into the 8th grade. There is increased focus on research and argumentation. The District now has a clear vision of where we are going in 8th grade. A lot of work has been done this year in restructuring 10th grade and looking at that downward extension to give students more practice by introducing argumentation earlier. There is now a PLC (Professional Learning Community) for argumentation to put argumentation in a more logical scaffolded plan for introducing those skills to students in a more structured way over time. They give students more practice in mini-papers focusing on one area and then building on it with each paper. It has been successful. The struggle with the argumentative paper is that students must be on standard in every area as opposed to a WASL or on-demand kind of assessment where they do not have to meet standard in everything, just most of them. We have been integrating literature and literary analysis as an argumentative paper at 9th and 10th grades. More and more students are more and more successful. The argumentative paper is becoming more embedded and institutionalized. Teachers are excited about the work.

The principals then followed with information about how they are seeing argumentation presented in their building and how they are measuring that in other ways besides the argumentative paper as a graduation requirement. Terry Cheshire said he is fully supportive of reducing the argumentative paper as a stand-alone. Youngsters need to be using these skills in all areas, not just writing. Don Lichty oversees the argumentative paper and CE at JHS. The argumentative paper is taught during first semester junior English and a mini-paper is done as a sophomore. They remediate those students who do not meet standard for the argumentative paper by either paying a teacher to stay after school and work with the students or to offer a class for students during their senior year who did not pass it their junior year. It is also interesting to note, he said, that a student can pass junior English and not pass the argumentative paper. Steve Johnson spoke to the curriculum side of the argumentative paper and the restructuring of the curriculum over the last couple of years to meet the demand. If the argumentative paper was not a graduation requirement, teachers would still be teaching the same things about argumentation, but would feel liberated to teach argumentation more effectively and

**STUDY SESSION—
ARGUMENTATIVE
PAPER (cont'd.)**

widespread if they did not have the logistical concerns associated with tracking that one paper. Many students are intimidated by this one paper. Argumentation is not going away; we believe in it, but the logistics of this one paper need to be discussed. Catherine Matthews said these are vitally important skills, but she wonders whether we should have the argumentative paper as an individual graduation requirement. Kelly Clapp work is continuing and improvements are being seen. She talked about the kinds of papers and said the District should continue to work on argumentation, but it need not be part of the CE. Sally Lancaster said teaching students to engage in argumentation constructively and successfully is important. She talked about the focus of argumentation at different grade levels. The discussion has moved away from what students are learning to 'the paper.' Cathy Woods said argumentation is being embedded in Cascade High School's curriculum, but 'the paper' is getting in students' way. PLCs have helped with alignment and made 'the paper' less of a monster. The rigor is in the curriculum and we are not talking about taking away the rigor. Terry agreed that the big piece is the idea of rigor for students. This paper served a good purpose and got us to where we are now.

President Cooper said she felt tonight's case was argued very well. She feels assured that the argumentative skill is embedded in other classes and having the argumentative paper as a graduation requirement probably has been a problem for some time. Board member Petersen said if there are other ways of achieving mastery, then that's great, but we must be able to tell our public that we are producing critical thinkers. Board member Dutton said there is a critical value to being able to write and craft arguments. She, too, questions the need of having the argumentative paper as a stand-alone high stakes 'monster.' If we can tell the community we are doing our job and the students are doing their jobs, then it's alright with her. Board member Madsen said being able to produce a piece of writing is important for youngsters and if we can be certain that students write from 7th grade on and do more than writing briefly in a journal at the end of a class, then it's alright with her.

President Cooper said she was struck by the unanimity of tonight's presenters' opinions about the argumentative paper. In response to a question from Board member Petersen concerning timing issues and by when a decision needs to be made, Terry said the Administration will work on revising the graduation policy and then bring it to the Board for first reading, probably in June, with adoption recommended in late June or July, and then change the graduation requirement beginning in September. This adjustment would apply to next year's seniors.

Terry stressed that this is not about diminishing the educational rigor for students. It was a bold and good decision 13 years ago, but this is another time. The world has changed in 13 years.

The Board discussed its self-evaluation. Board member Dutton suggested that, because of the volume of the work we have had to do this year, the Board postpone reviewing the results of the Board's self-evaluation until the Board's retreat.

**BOARD SELF-
EVALUATION**

President Cooper adjourned the regular meeting at 8 p.m.

Karst Brandsma, Secretary

Sue Cooper, President