

**SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**FRAMEWORK FOR REVISED STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PLAN**

Approved June 20, 2007

A new Student Assignment Plan should provide every student with access to a quality education that supports enhanced achievement for all students, including elimination of the achievement gap. Toward these ends, the new plan should enable stronger family engagement with schools, provide equitable access to programs, continue to offer opportunities for school choice, and foster diversity. This requires strong leadership at every school, careful and intentional location of specialized programs, and structural changes in how students are assigned to schools.

**Component A – ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

1. Each regular elementary school would still have a reference area. Students would start with a base assignment to a local reference area school, providing predictability for families. If they want to keep this assignment, the family would not have to do anything else.
2. Families could still exercise school choice for any reference area elementary school (in cluster with transportation or out of cluster without transportation, as at present), or for an alternative school. However, clusters would generally be smaller than they are now.
3. Reference areas would be modified to:
  - Align with the student population residing in each area and with building capacity (including attention to areas with potential for growth in market share) so students could attend their reference area elementary school if desired. Target enrollment for each school will be set centrally by the District in 2007-2008, and will be used for making assignments beginning in 2008-2009.
  - Maximize walking access to schools within a safe and realistic distance.
4. Students who would be affected by assignment plan changes would have a continuity assignment (often called “grandfathering”) to the current school. The extent of continued (“grandfathered”) transportation would depend on the implementation schedule.  
If assignment to the reference area school is not possible during the phase-in process due to continuity assignments, students would be assured of a seat at one of the schools in their cluster, with transportation, as at present.

5. Clusters that combine several reference areas would be modified to:

- Continue to give families choice with transportation, but within a smaller

geographic area (fewer elementary schools in most clusters).

- Add the flexibility of staggered school opening and closing times as an additional choice element for families, with transportation provided within the cluster. This has an additional benefit of saving on transportation costs.
- Address varying needs around the district. For instance, clusters in high poverty areas might be larger than other clusters to enhance the likelihood of school continuity, with transportation, despite family mobility.

### **Component B – COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

1. Each comprehensive middle school would have a base attendance area. Students would start with a base assignment to middle school consistent with their elementary cluster, offering predictability and continuity as a choice for families. If they want to keep this assignment, the family would not have to do anything else.
2. Families could still exercise school choice for any comprehensive middle school as at present, or for an alternative school. However, there would not be a second “regional priority” comprehensive middle school.
3. Base attendance areas would be developed to:
  - Align with the student population residing in each area (including attention to areas with potential for growth in market share) with elementary cluster(s), and with building capacity. Target enrollment for each school will be set centrally by the District in 2007-2008, and will be used for making assignments beginning in 2008-2009.
    - Maximize walking access to schools within a safe and realistic distance.
  - Allow for efficient transportation of students beyond a safe and realistic distance from the school.
4. Students who would be affected by assignment plan changes would have a continuity assignment (often called “grandfathering”) to the current school. The extent of continued (“grandfathered”) transportation would depend on the implementation schedule.

5. The predictability and continuity that will be provided by elementary to middle school feeder patterns is one important step that may help to address the annual enrollment loss between elementary and middle schools. In addition, the District will review course offerings at comprehensive middle schools to determine where these might need to be supplemented to provide children in all parts of the city equitable access to quality programs. This will also be considered in the context of the District's work in developing Weighted Staffing Standards for allocating personnel to each school. This change in school funding has been approved by the Board for implementation beginning in 2008-2009.

### **Component C – COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS**

1. Each comprehensive high school would have a designated assignment area. Assignment predictability would be provided by accommodating all students in the school's assignment area if they select it as their first choice school.

2. Families could still exercise school choice for any comprehensive high school or for an alternative school. Each comprehensive high school would have seats designated for Open Choice.

3. Assignment areas would be developed for each comprehensive high school to:

- Align student population in each assignment area (including attention to areas with potential for growth in market share) with the capacity of a nearby school, taking into account designation of seats for Open Choice. Target enrollment for each school will be set centrally by the District in 2007-2008, and will be used for making assignments beginning in 2008-2009.
- Students who would be affected by assignment plan changes would have a continuity assignment (often called "grandfathering") to the current school. As Metro transportation is phased in for all high schools, students would get a Metro pass to attend any school beyond the transportation boundary for the high school they attend.

### **Component D – SCHOOL CHOICE**

#### **1. Elementary Schools**

- Families could still exercise school choice for any reference area elementary school (in cluster with transportation or out of cluster without transportation, as at present), or for an alternative school. However, clusters would generally be smaller than they are now.

## 2. Comprehensive Middle Schools

- Families could still exercise school choice for any comprehensive middle school as at present, or for an alternative school. However, there would not be a second “regional priority” comprehensive middle school.

## 3. Comprehensive High Schools

- Families could still exercise school choice for any comprehensive high school or for an alternative school. Each comprehensive high school would also have seats designated for Open Choice.
- As the Board-approved transition to Metro transportation for all high schools is implemented, transportation for Open Choice students at comprehensive high schools becomes cost effective and logistically feasible.

## 4. Alternative/Non-Traditional Schools

- Families could still exercise school choice for alternative and non-traditional schools.
- A taxonomy for the types of alternative and non-traditional schools would be developed to make it easier for families to understand their options. Tiebreaker rules would be simplified for these schools.

## 5. Tiebreakers

- Sibling priority is currently applied as the first tiebreaker for assignment to every type and level of school. There are valid reasons for this. For example, sibling priority supports family engagement, allowing families to be involved with fewer schools; and allows families and schools to build long term relationships. In addition, transportation can be provided more efficiently.
- Sibling priority would be continued as is in the revised Student Assignment Plan.
- Other existing tiebreakers would be reviewed, and tiebreakers developed for processing applications to oversubscribed elementary and middle schools, for Open Choice seats at comprehensive high schools, and for alternative and non-traditional schools.
- Some possible tiebreakers could include: distance, 1<sup>st</sup> choice, lottery, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, and geography. Tiebreakers can

also be applied in various sequences.

- One of the drivers in regard to tiebreakers is the District's goal of fostering diversity. There is presently a case pending before the United States Supreme Court regarding use of an "integration tiebreaker" in Seattle Public Schools. It is anticipated that the Court's decision will clarify what race conscious and race neutral measures may be taken by the District to foster diversity.

## **Component E – THE SOUTHEAST EDUCATION INITIATIVE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Development of The Southeast Education Initiative reflects a recognition that targeted, District-level intervention is needed to support efforts of selected secondary schools in southeast Seattle to enhance the range of quality programs and instruction that they offer to students.

The vision of the initiative is to:

- Ensure that local secondary schools are the "schools of choice" for residents of southeast Seattle by providing targeted and sustained resources that will enable each school to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for school transformation.
- Schools will include Aki Kurose Middle School, Cleveland High School, and Rainier Beach High School.

The District will make a **three-year commitment** to be focused in the following areas:

- Commitment to staffing mitigation
- Provide planning support in 2007-08
- Invest in targeted academic resources
- Expand Flight support and seek external funding for school environment, family support, and other "wrap-around" initiatives

Each school will develop transformation plans that should address:

- Increased rigor in core academic subject areas
- Expansion of academic & elective offerings
- Development of a research-based signature program
- Community engagement to identify high priority issues for students and families

The District will establish an accountability framework with the following components:

- Joint decision-making between central and school leadership
- Clear three-year program goals for each school with a summative program evaluation
- Annual evaluation of interim benchmark data for each school

## BACKGROUND

The current system of funding schools (through the Weighted Student Formula) can result in a “downward spiral” when an undersubscribed school has to cut programs because of limited funding – resulting in fewer students being attracted to the school, leading to further reductions in funding. In addition, our current complicated Student Assignment Plan can lead to late enrollment at undersubscribed schools – resulting in lost instructional time for students and making it difficult for schools to be cost effective in their planning, scheduling, and staffing.

The Board has approved a new approach to allocating resources to schools (Weighted Staffing Standards), and is also addressing the Student Assignment Plan. However, while Weighted Staffing Standards and a new Student Assignment Plan can reduce or eliminate some of the structural barriers to student achievement, what matters most to families is that a high quality education program, including equitable access to programs, is available at whatever school a child attends.

Across our city, there are many schools meeting family expectations and achieving positive student outcomes, including some schools in the southeast area of Seattle that are demonstrating extraordinary accomplishments.

There are also schools that are not having such positive successes with their students. While there are certainly schools in other areas of the city that also need attention, several such schools are located in the southeast region. Therefore, the Southeast Education Initiative will initially focus attention and resources on certain schools in this area most in need of District-level support.

## FUNDING COMMITMENT

The District proposes to make a long-term funding commitment to each school from September 1, 2007 to August 31, 2010 (FY2008 to FY2010) predicated upon joint decision-making between the District and school leadership:

- **Commitment to Staffing Mitigation** – Maintain a commitment to provide mitigation to address the differential between necessary core staffing and enrollment-driven funding over the life of the Southeast Education Initiative.
- **Provide Planning Support** -- Provide a \$25,000 budget (as well as central office support) for FY08 to each school to support the development of a comprehensive plan for school transformation that focuses on a research-based middle or high school model. Uses of the planning dollars will likely include:

- o Collaborative planning time for school staff
- o Supporting a community engagement process (e.g. facilitators)
- o Conducting surveys to key stakeholders including students, teachers, parents / families, and the broader community
- o Identifying external funding opportunities to support school transformation

• **Invest in Targeted Academic Resources** -- Provide additional targeted academic resources based on the individual needs of each school. The District will also provide central office support in areas such as optimizing the master schedule to meet the needs of students, ensuring the integration of Pathways and other central programs, assisting in grant procurement, and using initial and formative assessments to inform instructional practice.

- o **Aki Kurose Middle School** – 2007-08 resource commitment of 1.0 – 2.0 FTEs pending further discussions with the new principal.
- o **Cleveland High School** -- 2007-08 resource requirements for Cleveland HS are to be determined after more in-depth discussions with the school's leadership team.
- o **Rainier Beach High School** -- 2007-08 resource requirements for Rainier Beach HS were developed in collaboration with the Principal, Robert Gary. They include 2.0 FTEs to expand Advanced Placement offerings as well as 0.8 FTE for drama and 1.0 FTE for music to build the school's performing arts program. In addition, there will be a \$15,000 budget in FY08 for equipment and supplies for science labs as well as additional support for performing arts.

• **Expand Flight Support and Seek External Funding for School Environment, Family Support, and Other “Wrap-Around” Initiatives** – Integration with the Flight Initiative is an important component of the Southeast Education Initiative. Working with SEA and the Flight program, the District proposes that coordinated investment by the Flight program to continue to improve the school environment and sustain focused family support will provide the foundation on which to build academic success going forward. Key areas of focus will likely include:

- o Ensuring a safe learning environment on and around school campuses
- o Providing more counseling resources for drop-out prevention and increased attendance
- o Expanding marketing and communications efforts

**Table 1: Summary of Resource Commitment**

School	Pre-Existing Resources		New Resources from SE Initiative	
	Current Mitigation	Facility Improvements	FY08 Planning	Targeted Academic Resources
Aki Kurose Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exterior renovations</li> </ul>	\$25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.0 – 2.0 FTEs (to be finalized with the new principal)</li> </ul>
Cleveland High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Building in 2007</li> </ul>	\$25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be determined</li> </ul>
Rainier Beach High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.8 FTEs in FY08</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library, art classroom, and culinary classroom (\$4.0-6.0 Million)</li> </ul>	\$25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.0 FTEs for Advanced Placement</li> <li>• 1.0 FTE for Music</li> <li>• 0.8 FTE for Drama</li> <li>• \$15,000 in FY08 for equipment and supplies for science laboratories.</li> <li>• Additional support for performing arts program</li> </ul>

**Note:** AAA is not formally included in the initiative but receives staffing mitigation to eliminate split classes as well as a 1.0 FTE Head Teacher.

Total cost for FY08 is approximately \$901,425. This includes \$90,000 of one-time spending in FY08 plus an on-going operating cost of \$811,425 per year (using FY08



assumptions). The \$811,425 breaks down into about \$358,538 of current mitigation and \$452,887 of new resources. These figures do not reflect incremental dollars from the Flight school program or the potential for external funding opportunities.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The District recognizes that the market-based system of open choice and weighted student formula has had the potential to create a “downward spiral” for a school. Enrollment losses are compounded by the loss of funding that reduces the academic offerings of a school which will very likely generate additional enrollment loss. We believe that schools should be provided with the resources to succeed and this is reflected in the funding commitment of the Southeast Education Initiative. To provide schools with clear objectives, the District (in consultation with each school in Summer 2007) will also establish a rigorous accountability process that will set school-specific program goals (for Fall 2010) in the following areas:

- Enrollment Growth
- % of First Choice
- Increased Academic Achievement
- Student and Teacher Climate Survey Results
- Attendance

Accompanying the program goals, the District proposes to establish a protocol for a “summative” program evaluation for the Fall 2010 in addition to an annual “formative” evaluation process. **The summative program evaluation would establish upfront the following responses to each school’s actual performance through Fall 2010 relative to the program goals:**

- **Meeting Program Goals (within 10% of goal)** – Enrollment gains would be expected to generate funding to supplant the incremental resource commitments of the District. Incremental resources would be reduced by 50% for the 2010-2011 school year and eliminated completely for the 2011-2012 school year.
- **Not Meeting Program Goals** – If after three years of sustained investment a particular school is unable to meet the program enrollment and academic goals, collaboratively developed by administration and staff, the District should strongly consider applying accountability standards and options based on the goal or goals not met. The District fully appreciates the impact of such decisions but believes that these are critical elements of a comprehensive accountability program. In the event of reconstitution or repurposing, the District will provide sufficient resources to ensure a successful transition for students, parents, families, staff, and the broader community. In making any such changes, the District will work with each of the affected Unions to ensure that contract language is applied correctly.
- **Issues Beyond District Control** – The District has every intention of making a three-year funding commitment. However, there may be circumstances that occur

beyond the District's control that would make this commitment financially imprudent or academically unsupportable. Accordingly, the District will re-evaluate this initiative at the end of each of the three years in light of the District's finances and each school's academic viability based on current enrollment.

In addition to the summative evaluation for each school, there will be annual formative evaluations to sustain what's working and rethink what's not working. Each school will establish annual benchmarks necessary to achieve each summative program goal as part of the planning process for the 2007-08 school year. These annual benchmarks will be evaluated by the school as well as the central office in order to drive program adjustments. A preliminary timeline for the Southeast Education Initiative is presented below in Table 2.

### Table 2: Preliminary Timeline

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