

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND EDUCATIONAL EQUITY COMMITTEE NOTES
333 South Beaudry Avenue – 1st Floor Board Room
1:00 p.m., Thursday, September 11, 2008

Committee Members

Marguerite Poindexter LaMotte, Chairperson
Marlene Canter
Yolie Flores Aguilar
Dr. Richard Vladovic

District Staff

Judy Elliott, Ph.D., Chief Academic Officer
Vivian Ekchian, Interim Chief Human Resources Officer
Liza Scruggs, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent
Instructional Support Services
Jerry Thornton, Inspector General

External Representatives

Judith Perez, AALA Representative
Julie Washington, Elementary
Vice-President, UTLA Representative
Gregg Solkovits, Secondary Vice-President
UTLA Representative
Steven Frankel, Ed.D., President
Steven Frankel, Inc.
Francisco Torrero, Parent Collaborative
David Tokofsky

Board Secretariat Contact

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The meeting convened at 1:13 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS

Chair Marguerite LaMotte made brief opening remarks and introduced Dr. Noma LeMoine, Director, Closing the Achievement Gap and Academic English Master Program (AEMP) Branch.

IMPLEMENTING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND RELEVANT EDUCATION (CRRE) IN THE DISTRICT

Dr. LeMoine provided an overview of the Culturally Responsive and Relevant Education (CRRE) video series, depicting how culturally relevant pedagogy is embedded into core content instruction. She indicated that this is an instructional support tool for teachers designed to facilitate improved academic achievement in underperforming students in the District. She briefly shared the content of the video series and stated that educators will be able to improve their understanding and application of this pedagogy for advancing learning in underperforming students, and change their pedagogy, not their curriculum, to obtain better engagement and better students' outcome. She noted that the video series presented in this Committee addresses the academic content standards of the fourth and fifth grade Language Arts lesson, including comprehension, literary responsive analysis, and listening and speaking skills.

Dr. LeMoine responded to questions and concerns from Committee Members.

Committee Members supported the implementation of the Culturally Responsive and Relevant Education (CRRE) program.

Board Member Flores Aguilar asked Dr. LeMoine to bring forward to the Board a policy proposal and timelines for consideration of implementing this system throughout the District.

Board Member Marlene Canter supported Board Member Flores Aguilar's recommendation, and asked the Committee to hold this recommendation until Board Members have an opportunity to discuss this issue with Dr. Judy Elliott, Chief Academic Officer.

UPDATE: UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - GRANT EVALUATION REPORT COHORTS III-VI – SMALL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (SLC)

Dr. Shelley Weston, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Instruction, presented an update on Small Learning Communities (SLC), Cohorts III, IV, V, and VI. She indicated that in 2000, the United States Department of Education awarded grants to schools and school districts to implement Small Learning Communities. The US Department of Education required the districts to obtain an evaluation from a third party in order to receive the grant. The District contracted Public Works, Inc, a non-profit organization, as an external evaluator. Dr. Weston introduced Mr. Michael Buttler, representing Public Works, Inc., who provided a lengthy evaluation report on Small Learning Communities for school year 2006-2007, covering 28 comprehensive high schools in Cohorts III-VI.

Mr. Buttler gave a brief background, reviewed the context of the evaluation, the results, and provided recommendations. The report indicates that the objective of Small Learning Communities (SLC) is to *create a more personalized high school experience for students in smaller schools within schools and improve student achievement and overall school performance.* He stated that in addition to the requirements from the Federal Government, the District developed a list of attributes, such as providing a rigorous, standards- based curriculum, instruction, and assessment; professional development; equity and access; personalization; accountability; collaboration; and parent and community engagement. Mr. Buttler reported that Public Works, Inc. used these attributes as a basis to conduct their evaluation. He explained the process and strategies in obtaining these findings. He highlighted that the enrollment in Small Learning Communities (SLC) has increased and become more demographically representative; and he showed a few graphs depicting these results. Since this initiative was implemented, the rate of dropout and transience for students in grades 9 and 10 has decreased; and students in Small Learning Communities (SLC) are more likely to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in English and Language Arts (ELA), and Mathematics. He showed graphs depicting the rates pertaining to these findings by category and cohort.

Mr. Buttler indicated that the students and staff surveys show that students feel part of a school community, better about classroom experiences, and a much higher degree of personalization. The staff survey reveals that some of the barriers to Small Learning Communities (SLC) implementation include:

- Adequacy of facilities - large overcrowded schools;
- staff resistance to change - departmental structure is the most resilient at the secondary level;
- adapting master schedule;
- parent and community involvement - low participation; and
- staff collaboration.

Mr. Buttler highlighted key accomplishments and challenges in the implementation of Small Learning Communities (SLC). He stated that more staff and students are involved; there is more distributed leadership, more involvement opportunities for teachers and counselors leaders, and assistant principals; improvement in the master schedule alignment to Small Learning Communities (SLC); and schools with 9 grade house structures did better in terms of personalization, parent outreach, and dropout prevention.

He explained that there are two models for doing Small Learning Communities (SLC), 9-12 grade structure, and 9^{grade} house structure; the latter is more successful. In addition, he highlighted a few key challenges in the implementation of Small Learning Communities (SLC); such as:

- the academic identity of Small Learning Communities (SLC) has been slow to emerge;
- Small Learning Communities (SLC) have not received sufficient professional development time at many schools;
- professional development provided by Small Learning Communities (SLC) teams has not been adequately focused on improving instructional practices; such as infusing instructional delivery with Small Learning Communities (SLC) themes or developing common instructional approaches.

Mr. Buttler's recommendations to Local Districts included to:

- audit and monitor school master schedules;
- assist schools in the alignment of school improvement plans (WASC, PI, SLC)
- minimize site administrative turnover;
- assist schools in designing professional development; and
- support schools in use of data, disaggregated by Small Learning Communities (SLC).

He concluded his presentation with recommendations for District central administrative staff. He indicated that there is a need of a strong recommitment to Small Learning Communities (SLC) as an "umbrella" to restructuring effort that encompasses standards-base instructional reforms; provide guidance on how to integrate Small Learning Communities (SLC) identity with accountability and curricular mandates, such as, pacing guides and formative assessments and translate District instructional mandates for Small Learning Communities (SLC); ensure that Small Learning Communities (SLC) are staffed with highly qualified teachers in all score academic areas and assigned to a specific Small Learning Community (SLC); provide leadership training for Small Learning Communities (SLC) leads, department chairs, and assistant principals.

Mr. Buttler responded to questions and concerns from Committee Members.

Committee Members supported the Small Learning Communities initiative, and held a lengthy discussion on this subject. Some of the concerns included the 9-grade houses structure, facility accommodations, class size, accuracy of the survey data, infrastructure, training for administrators to cooperate with teachers, counseling, and staffing.

Chair LaMotte asked Mr. Buttler to bring another update to the Committee at a future meeting.

SPEAKER

Mr. Scott Folson, Small Learning Communities Central Committee, expressed his concern regarding this evaluation process. He stated that his Committee was not informed nor asked for their participation and input. In response to Mr. Folson's concern, *Board Member Flores Aguilar recommended keeping the Central Committee informed on issues related to Small Learning Communities.*

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UT/LA/DISTRICT JOINT TASK FORCE ON CLASS SIZE REDUCTION

Ms. Shelley Weston, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary, introduced Mr. Jan Davis, Director, High School Programs, who made a brief introduction and informed the Committee that Mr. Bruce Williams,

Co-Chair, District-UTLA Joint Class Size Reduction Task Force, will provide a report regarding class size reduction for all physical education classes. Mr. Williams gave a brief background on this initiative and indicated that the task force sent an Informative to the Board, dated June 26, 2008, asking for the average in physical education classes be reduced to 45:1, and for a maximum cap of 55:1. He introduced Mr. Chad Finwick, Advisor, who provided a synopsis of the task force's findings and an estimated budget for the implementation in all middle and high schools; approximately \$8,594,000. In addition, he noted that the task force made the following recommendations to the District:

- in September 2008, commence the implementation with grade 6;
- in the Fall of 2009, institute a maximum cap of 55:1 in grade 7, for physical education classes;
- in the Fall of 2009, commence the maximum cap in grade 7, for physical education classes; and
- each following year through 2014 and beyond, begin adding one grade.

Dr. Weston, Mr. Davis, and Mr. Williams responded to questions and concerns from Committee Members.

Committee Members supported this initiative, requested additional data and information regarding budget and funding sources, and recommended this initiative to be brought forward to the Board for consideration.

UPDATE - 2008 CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TESTS (CST) AND SAT REASONING TEST SCORES

Dr. Cynthia Lim, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Planning and Assessment Division, presented an update and a brief background on the school year 2007/2008 California Standard Tests (CST) and SAT Reasoning Test, and results. Dr. Lim noted that the California Standard Tests (CST) are designed to assess how well students are achieving the state standards in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, History, and Social Science. The scores are reported by performance levels; such as advanced, proficient, basic, below basic and far below basic. Dr. Lim included graphs depicting the District's results by grade and performance level. She highlighted that in:

- English Language Arts (ELA), approximately 44% of the students in grades 2 and 4 scored proficient, and about 29% in grades 3, 9, 10 and 11 scored proficient and/or advanced.
- Mathematics, over 50% of the students in grades 2 and 6 scored proficient. She noted that in Algebra I and Geometry, a low percentage of students, in grades 7-11, scored proficient and advanced.
- Science, approximately 40% of the students in grades 5 and 8 scored proficient and advanced, but more students scored below basics in Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physics.

Dr. Lim stated that the SAT measures the critical thinking skills of students. Three sections of the test include critical writing, mathematics, and reading. She indicated that in 2007/2008 school year, 46% of students in grade 12 took the SAT; and the number of test takers increased by 1,038 students. In addition, she provided tables comparing the SAT scores for each section, for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 school years; a list of schools that tested the largest number of students; and scores by ethnicity. She concluded her presentation by providing data regarding the demographic profile of test takers, family income, and parent education level. She highlighted that the data by ethnicity shows that there is an achievement gap; the lowest performing groups tend to be African American and Hispanics.

Dr. Lim responded to questions and concerns from Committee Members.

Committee Members had a lengthy discussion and expressed concerns regarding several issues; such as, the low number of students taking the SAT, and the scores on Mathematics, Chemistry, and World History subject exams.

Chair LaMotte requested Dr. Lim to provide a chart comparing the performance level of students taking the California Standards Tests (CST) and the SAT in the District, County, State, and in the nation. In addition, Chair LaMotte asked for a report reflecting the number of questions a student has to answer to be considered proficient and advance.

Board Member Flores Aguilar asked Dr. Lim to provide the Committee a five-year trend period chart depicting the average number of students taking the SAT in the District, County, State, and nation.

Committee Members showed concern regarding the results provided by Dr. Lim and recommended an analysis be conducted for the District to find some solutions.

Chair LaMotte invited Ms. Sonia Rodarte, Specialist, Student Expulsion Intervention Unit, to make a special announcement. Ms. Rodarte invited the Committee and the public to a summit for Equal Protection and Civil Rights for All Students in the District to be held on October 18, 2008, at 8:30 a.m., at Bancroft Middle School. Ms. Rodarte noted that the summit was prepared as a result of a Resolution the Board passed in support of Equal Protections and Civil Rights for All Students in the District. She provided a brief background regarding the origin of the resolution. She also stated that the resolution addresses the inequities of achievement based on data that is disaggregated by race. She indicated that the District's data show that there is a disproportionate representation of African American and Latino youth referred and assessed for special education, and a low level of achievement of certain racial groups. The resolution provides recommendations, such as:

- reviewing and analyzing school policies that might have resulted in the inequitable treatment of African American and Hispanics students or any other ethnicity,
- evaluation of professional development regarding equity,
- developing a remediation plan for the overrepresentation of African American and Hispanic student in special education.

Ms. Rodarte indicated that the summit will address these recommendations, and she asked for all stakeholders' participation and support.

SPEAKERS:

Ms. Janet Davis, Ms. Mariaelena Hernandez, Ms. Cheryl Ortega, Ms. Judith Barragan, teachers, Ms. Barba Javvik, former teacher, and Ms. Maritza Medina and Ms. Carmen Ortega, parents, supported the Master Plan Teacher Program, which has been eliminated, and asked the Committee to consider reinstating it. They noted that this program has helped many teachers to improve the communication gap between teachers, parents, and students.

IMPLICATIONS OF 2008 CST RESULTS FOR KEY BOARD POLICIES

This item was postponed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

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AGENDA

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| 1. | Opening Remarks | Marguerite LaMotte, Chairperson | 5 minutes |
| 2. | Implementing Culturally Responsive Education in LAUSD | Dr. Noma LeMoine, Director
Closing the Achievement Gap/AEMP Branch | 15 minutes |
| 3. | USDE Grant Evaluation Report – Cohorts 3-6: Small Learning Communities | Dr. Shelley Weston, Assistant Superintendent
Secondary Instruction
Michael Butler, Public Works, Inc. | 15 minutes |
| 4. | Recommendations of the UTLA/District Joint Task Force on Class Size Reduction | Bruce Williams, Co-Chair, Class Size Reduction
Dr. Shelley Weston, Assistant Superintendent
Jan Davis, Director, High School Programs | 15 minutes |
| 5. | 2008 CST and SAT Test Scores Update | Dr. Cynthia Lim, Interim Assistant Superintendent
Planning and Assessment | 20 minutes |
| 6. | Implications of 2008 CST Results for Key Board Policies | Dr. Randy Ross, Board of Education Director of Educational Policy | 20 minutes |
| 7. | Speakers – Persons who wish to address this committee may sign-up at this meeting. | | |
| 8. | Adjournment | | |

The Committee may consider and act upon motions, Board Reports, or other business referred to it by the Board of Education or Committee of the Whole, with respect to any properly posted matter at a meeting immediately preceding this committee meeting, where the time between that meeting and this committee meeting is less than 72 hours. Members of the public are encouraged to review the order of business or agenda for the meeting of the Board of Education or Committee of the Whole. "For more information, go to <http://www.laschoolboard.org>, Curriculum and Instruction Committee."

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If you or your organization is seeking to influence a purchasing, policy, site selection or any other LAUSD decision, registration may be required under the District's Lobbying Disclosure Code. Please visit www.lausd.net/ethics <<http://www.lausd.net/ethics>> to determine if you need to register or call the LAUSD Ethics Office at: 213-241-3330.

Materials related to an item on this agenda submitted to the Board of Education, including those submitted after the initial distribution of materials, are available for public inspection at the Security Desk on the first floor of the Administrative Headquarters, at the meeting, and at: <http://beta.laschoolboard.org/node/115>