

Grade Alignment Task Force

Meeting Number 3

March 26, 2019

Participants:

Dr. Jill Gildea, PCSD
Jim Tedford, Community
Julie Hastings, PCSD
Genevieve Healy, Parent
Kelly Cronley, Parent/PCSD
Kathy Anderson, PCSD
Paula McKay, PCSD
Patricia Munoz, PCSD
Joann Funseth, Parent
Jody Fey, Parent
Sam Salinas, PCSD
Traci Evans, PCSD
Todd Hauber, PCSD
Mimi Milner, Parent

Consulting Team:

Christine Richman, GSBS
Victoria Bergsagel, A of A
Valerie Nagasawa, GSBS
Clio Rayner, GSBS

1. Discussion on Pre-Kindergarten and Early Learning:

- a. Dr. Gildea discussed the value of early childhood education. She described the pre-school landscape in Park City:
 - i. There are several good pre-school options in Park City.
 - ii. Pre-school is offered at all four PCSD elementary schools but the schools have run out of space to add capacity.
 - iii. PCSD accepts pre-school students who live within the PCSD but does not take pre-school students from outside the district.
 - iv. Federal law mandates programming only for special needs students ages three through 22; however, everyone can benefit from early learning, whether public, private or a combination.
 - v. PCSD currently works with the We Can early learning curriculum and collaborates with private providers to share ideas and provide similar preschool experiences for the students.
 - vi. PCSD collaborates with Holy Cross Ministries, who provides preschool and also support to parents such as home visits. They also partner with PC Tots who offer extended hours, 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.
- b. Dr. Gildea thanked the task force for their research and work on grade alignment and noted that many models can work.
 - i. The community's education vision is the most important driver.
 - ii. Decisions must be learner-centered and include a good plan for the transitions.
 - iii. A good plan for transitions includes, visits to the new school, meeting the new teachers, and walking the new schedule.
- c. Dr. Gildea discussed the "return on investment" of early learning in creating greater social equity.

- i. The students who need early learning opportunities the most are those for whom part-day options don't always work. Without full-day and extended before and after school options, the reach is limited.
 - d. Early Childhood Center model:
 - i. Pre-school only, kindergarten at the elementary schools
 - ii. Dr. Gildea described a model from her past experience in Chicago. It was a partnership of three school districts.
 - iii. Positives of this model:
 - 1. Age-appropriate design
 - 2. Sense of confidence instilled in the young students that it is their school
 - 3. Wrap-around services, such as medical and dental care, which are possible when centralized
 - 4. Parent involvement
 - 5. Enhanced professional development opportunity for teachers (due to proximity)
 - 6. Family education
 - iv. Bussing:
 - 1. In the Chicago example, bussing was provided for students.
 - 2. Will PCSD parents put their young children on busses alone?
 - 3. Kathy noted that PCSD provides bussing for pre-schoolers currently. She estimated that about half of the pre-school students ride the bus to their neighborhood schools, some with older siblings and some without.
 - 4. A task force member noted that private pre-schools in Park City don't provide bussing.
 - 5. If an early learning center model were implemented, PCSD would be responsible for funding transportation.
 - 6. Bussing must be provided for Special Education students.
 - v. Location:
 - 1. Further study would be needed to determine whether one or two early learning centers best fulfill need and guiding principles
 - 2. Further study would also be needed to determine the right location, whether on one of the existing school sites, the Kearns campus, or the donated properties at Bear Hollow and Silver Creek.
 - vi. Other thoughts:
 - 1. The City and the PC Education Foundation are both very interested in this concept.
 - 2. The district daycare could also be moved to this facility. It is currently located in one classroom within PCHS and there is not enough space.
 - 3.
 - 4. There is a lot of focus on ways to close the achievement gap.
 - e. Pre-School within Elementary School model:
 - i. Pre-school classrooms have been absorbed within the elementary school buildings. Number of pre-school classes varies by elementary school for a total of nine classrooms in the district
 - ii. Pre-schools function independently. Elementary school principals don't oversee the pre-school program, teachers or students; however, they are involved, aware and supportive.
 - f. Student Outcomes:
 - i. Are there more benefits to children in an early learning center?
 - 1. Dr. Gildea responded that the time is right to look at the "world" of opportunities - umbrella services, expanded hours, public-private partnerships.
 - 2. These opportunities can be studied and priced as building additions to the elementary schools also.

2. Task Force Thoughts about Early Learning:

- a. When you walk into a pre-school center, you know that it is a place designed specifically for small children. The age-appropriate qualities are a strong positive.
- b. Could separate pre-school facilities be built on the elementary school grounds to capture the best of both worlds? There are advantages to elementary and pre-school students interacting, such as buddy reading and other programs.
- c. Kathy Anderson noted that there are pros and cons to both models. A positive aspect of being in the elementary schools is the interaction with the Latinos In Action students, who read to the pre-school students.
- d. Wrap-around services are a strong benefit for some of the PCSD students and families.
 - i. Discussed the SLCSO example in the Glendale neighborhood.
 - ii. The Kearns Campus Task Force discussed the importance of having community services/partners on campus.
 - iii. Sam told the group about his family's experience moving here from Mexico 10 years ago. The DSD pre-school his children attended was very important to he and his wife. It helped them get to know the school system and community services and gave them access to other parents. This was a foundational experience for his family.
 - iv. It is important that all PCSD students have easy access to pre-school.
 - v. Transportation will be a concern for a number of parents. Christine noted that she met with the Transportation Technical Committee, earlier today, and will fold their criteria into the process.
 - vi. There is a perception in the community that there's a lack of all-day preschool options. Kathy clarified that PCSD provides all-day pre-school at three of the four elementary schools. There are other providers who will pick up pre-school students and transport them for after-school care.
 - vii. Is a hybrid model possible where one elementary school has a larger pre-school center and the other three schools have smaller pre-school components?
 - viii. A number of teachers bring their children to the pre-school programs located in the schools where they teach.

3. Review of Criteria from other Task Forces:

- a. Christine reviewed the criteria that were developed by the other task forces. They are included on the attached hand-out.
- b. Comments as follows:
 - i. Could Treasure Mountain be used as a pre-school center?
 - ii. The Bear Hollow site would be good for an early childhood center because it is small.
 - iii. A previous study looked at putting a STEM elementary school on the Bear Hollow site.
- c. The task force agreed that the following criteria be added:
 - i. Utilize existing property before considering purchase of new.
 - ii. It will be added to a list of associated other criteria that do not fall under any one task force.

4. Finalize and Prioritize Grade Alignment Criteria:

- a. At previous Grade Alignment Task Force meeting, the group was asked to send the consultant team their top three to five criteria against which grade alignment decisions should be made. The group reviewed the criteria along with the criteria developed at the previous two meetings and vetted whether each:
 - i. Belongs in the criteria list
 - ii. Is a guiding principle and therefore applies to all decisions
 - iii. Belongs in a parking lot of important issues to be addressed and/or implemented but is not criteria for grade alignment (some of these are covered in other task forces)

- b. Discussion was as follows:
 - i. What is best for kids and their education:
 - 1. Too general. Descriptive points were reviewed individually.
 - ii. Safety (school size):
 - 1. Clarified as safe school culture or social-emotional learning. It was decided that creating a safe school culture is part of the guiding principles and therefore applies to all scenarios. Remove from criteria list and add to parking lot.
 - iii. Academic achievement:
 - 1. Identified as a foundational requirement of the strategic plan that could be assumed in all that PCSD pursues
 - iv. Class size:
 - 1. Addressed by the Class Size Task Force.
 - v. Sense of community:
 - 1. Duration of time in a single building enhances the sense of community and belonging. Added as criteria.
 - vi. Supported with research and data:
 - 1. Removed because, while the research assessed many options, it did not conclusively determine the correct alignment and many different alignments work for many different schools and districts
 - vii. Mindful of transitions
 - 1. Adjusted to Minimize Transitions
 - viii. Mindful of developmental stages:
 - 1. Maintained as criteria
 - ix. Minimize travel:
 - 1. Addressed by School Locations Task Force
 - x. Vertical alignment:
 - 1. Can be achieved in different grade alignment scenarios. Move to parking lot
 - xi. Flexible to accommodate current and future programs:
 - 1. This is a guiding principle and therefore applies to all scenarios.
 - xii. Equity:
 - 1. It was decided that grade alignment is not the most impactful way to address equity. Put in parking lot.
- c. Finalized criteria as follows:
 - i. Mindful of developmental stages
 - ii. Minimizes transitions
 - iii. Provides adequate duration in a building to build sense of community and belonging.
 - iv. Minimizes cohort size
- d. Sub-criteria for Early Learning as follows:
 - i. Learning and other spaces are intentionally designed for the age of students served.
 - ii. Approach to serving students allows engaged community partnerships
 - iii. Approach facilitates equitable access for all students
- e. The task force identified the following parking lot items that, although not directly related to grade alignment, are important to the overall plan and implementation:
 - i. DLI
 - ii. Preparing kids for the transitions
 - iii. Teacher certifications
 - iv. School boundaries
 - v. Bussing distance and transportation
 - vi. Equitable implementation
 - vii. Vertical alignment

- viii. Social-emotional learning (SEL)
 - ix. What does learning truly look like (when, where, how), especially in the high school?
- f. Other comments:
- i. Items in the parking lot must be resolved and implemented for vision to become reality. New buildings alone are not the answer. Resources must be allocated toward implementation.
 - ii. Important to keep the community focused on the criteria for decision-making rather than on the “parking lot” items, which is what they have focused on in the past.

End of meeting.