

LINKAGE

Community Linkage Meeting Academic Standards (Policy E-2) October 27, 2003

Our first linkage meeting under policy governance focused on Policy E-2, whose title is Competence Goal 1 – Academic Standards.

Essential questions asked at that meeting were:

- Given the state and federal requirements, what additions/deletions/modifications to our academic goals/standards would you as a citizen make?
- What are the strengths of our current academic programs to meet these standards?
- What are the gaps or improvements in our academic programs that need to be made for our students to meet these standards?
- What other ideas should we consider as we are working on these standards/goals?

We preceded the linkage meeting by advertising it in a press release and in district publications, as well as notices provided to parents.

Prior to the linkage meeting, the board held a short (20 minute) meeting to dispense with mandatory business items.

The setting was in a high school cafeteria, with heterogeneous groups of stakeholders sitting at round tables, and a facilitator to obtain responses from each table, reported out after discussion by a representative of each table group.

The board's role was to listen.

NEWS ARTICLE ON FIRST LINKAGE MEETING

University Place board reaches out to public for help in setting standards

**DEBBY ABE; The News Tribune
October 21, 2003**

University Place School Board members say their students should be lifelong learners.

They should volunteer in the community, prepare themselves to be dependable, honest workers and exhibit integrity, a sense of humor, common sense and other characteristics of responsible citizenship.

They should, as a district, exceed Washington state test score averages.

But while that's what board members think, they want to hear their constituents' thoughts on the matter.

The board is inviting the public Wednesday to the first of several planned meetings to discuss goals and standards for the suburban district.

The push for public input is part of the board's new philosophy of conducting business called "policy governance."

The concept calls for the board to avoid micro-managing the daily affairs of the 5,000-student district.

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Instead, the board will concentrate on developing and refining district goals, such as raising the high school graduation rate. It holds the superintendent accountable for implementing the board vision.

"Our goal is a system that empowers the board, as owner representatives, to govern while freeing the superintendent to manage the district for maximum student achievement," board President Rick Maloney said.

"If we find that we have left too much room for interpretation, we revise policy rather than second-guess the superintendent," he said.

After two years of study, training and preparation, the board officially embarked on its new way of doing business in late August by adopting rewritten policies that reflect the change.

A growing number of cities and other entities around the country use the method, Maloney said.

The board still holds two meetings a month, but dispenses with some of the routine business - such as approving new textbooks - more quickly by approving them in a block with other measures.

It plans to devote more of its meetings to hearing from the public on district policies.

For instance, the board is developing five new goals under the following themes: academic competence; lifelong learning; the world of work; contribution and service to family, community and society; and citizenship.

Those broad goals are broken down into standards or categories. The most detailed goal, academic competence, calls for:

- University Place students to meet or exceed high standards in reading, writing, communication, math and other academic subjects.
- Students to perform above the Washington state average on standardized tests and other data.
- Schools to make adequate yearly progress on tests and other measurements under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.
- Elimination of achievement gaps between groups of students.

The academic competence goal lists the type of standardized tests, high school dropout rates and other ways to measure whether the district is meeting the goal.

The district already operated with the five goals in mind, but hadn't formally written them into policy, Superintendent Patti Banks said.

The first effort to collect public comment under policy governance takes place Wednesday, when the board will hear whether people think the academic competence standards are appropriate, too high or too low.

The new outreach effort should make it easier for people to make an impact on the district, Banks said.

"They've always had a voice, but the board now is much more aggressively seeking their input," she said.

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NOTES FROM LINKAGE MEETING

Community Linkage Meeting Responses by Question (dealing with ENDS) October 27, 2003

Discussion questions:

1. **Given the state and federal requirements, what additions/deletions/modifications to our academic goals/standards would you as a citizen make?**
 - ◆ Do not aim for minimum standards; reach for **higher**
 - ◆ Emphasize math and science, writing
 - ◆ How about **non-UW** students?
 - ◆ Standard: Raise to **80% mastery of EALRS** K-12 in Math, writing, reading, communication, science
 - ◆ Distribution of college placement, Jr. college vs. 4-year university
 - ◆ Interest in **ACT** as well as SAT
 - ◆ Would like to see increase in **percentage taking SATs**
 - ◆ For all nationally norm-referenced testing, that **UPSD outperforms national average**
 - ◆ Establish **reading benchmarks for 1st and 2nd graders**
 - ◆ **-words per minute** (timed reading)
 - ◆ All new students will achieve grade-level standards within 2 years
 - ◆ -X % improvement within Y years
 - ◆ Also need **benchmarks for other subjects for 1st and 2nd grade**;
-also need regular assessment.
 - ◆ Set **higher standards for math and reading K-12**
 - ◆ Clarify **comprehension** component and **reading** standard at **3rd grade level**
 - ◆ Data collection on **college graduates**.
 - ◆ Resources needed for students to improve reading performance beyond primary grades

 - ◆ Is the current testing schedule providing us with the information we need to improve performance?
 - incongruencies? (e.g., ITBS/WASL)
 - is it helpful to consider adding / analyzing **district-created assessments**?
 - ◆ **Math** emphasis should be equal to reading emphasis in grades **1-3**.
 - ◆ More specific standards.
 - ◆ More WASL-like tests at other grade levels.
 - ◆ Higher standards / increased rigor
 - ◆ Goal language too vague.
 - ◆ Definition / clarification of **criteria** re: "all children will read by 3rd grade." (**How measured, at what level?**)
 - ◆ Focus goals to **improvement** in SAT scores

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3. What are the gaps or improvements in our academic programs that need to be made for our students to meet these standards?

- ◆ All kids **reading by 2nd** grade
- ◆ Do not reach for minimum standards of achievement; aim higher in all areas
- ◆ Math achievement at 10th grade and SAT
- ◆ UW GPA discrepancy with graduating scores. What are we going to do about it?
- ◆ **Achievement gaps** must be in the foremost thoughts of the Board and Admin. Team;
- ◆ **Public speaking** – need more instruction and practice.
- ◆ UW figures – GAP
-How are we evaluating reasons and strategies for closing the gap?
- ◆ Positive results with lower class size at primary – **close gap at intermediates**
- ◆ Analysis of data re: disparate groups of students

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PRESS RELEASE:

UPSD FOLLOWS UP ON LINKAGE MEETINGS UNDER ITS NEWLY ADOPTED POLICY GOVERNANCE® MODEL

At its January 14, 2004 board meeting, the University Place school board adopted changes to its Academic Standards policy (Policy E-2). *“These changes to policy are a direct result of community input received during a recent linkage meeting, and implement the board’s intent when we adopted the policy governance model,”* said Board President Kent Keel, adding *“We meant what we said about linking with the community, and empowering citizens through their board to govern the district.”*

On October 27, 2003, the district conducted the first of several planned **linkage meetings** under the Policy Governance model. In a linkage meeting the board connects with community members, solicits their advice on a given topic, listens, and records the community’s expression of values and priorities relevant to that topic. The focus of the October linkage meeting was refining district academic standards as prescribed in Policy E-2. *“We received excellent input from our community; the Board’s responsiveness in incorporating this input into policy demonstrates their commitment to developing a vision for student achievement that is shared by all stakeholders in UPSD,”* said Superintendent Patti Banks.

“These adopted changes show that the board listened to that input.”

Among the changes adopted were the expectation that UP students outperform students not only in Washington but in the entire nation; requiring reading, writing, and math grade-level benchmarks; adding 1st and 2nd grade benchmarks to those for 3rd through 8th grade; requiring standards for 5th, 8th, and 10th grade science WASL results; setting standards for SAT and ACT in participation, average score, and improvement in average score; and percent of high school graduates attending 2-year or 4-year colleges.

The next linkage meeting for the district is scheduled for 7:00 pm, January 28, 2004 at the Curtis High School cafeteria. The purpose of this second linkage meeting will be developing policy for preparing students for **Life-Long Learning** and for the **World of Work**. A third linkage meeting, scheduled for the board’s second meeting in March, will focus on **Contribution/Service** and **Citizenship**. Interested community members are encouraged to attend.