

Community Linkage Meeting
Responses by Question
October 22, 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?
 - ◆ Teach basic math facts!
 - ◆ Expand before and after school reading / math programs
 - ◆ Eliminate whole language reading programs
 - ◆ Do not aim for minimum standards; reach for higher
 - ◆ Create our own benchmark
 - ◆ Find a way to see how classes progress (change resources if necessary).
 - ◆ Identify individuals at risk
 - ◆ Emphasize math and science, writing
 - ◆ How about non-UW students?
 - ◆ New programs must help standards or go!
 - ◆ Standard: Raise to 80% mastery of EALRS K-12 in Math, writing, reading, communication, science
 - ◆ Should AP participation be a measure?
 - ◆ Distribution of college placement, Jr. college vs. 4-year university
 - ◆ “Category 6” – interest in group in external outcome measures.

- ◆ 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)
- ◆ -assess in Spring & Fall (progress reports for teachers and parents)
- ◆ All new students will achieve grade-level standards within 2 years
- ◆ -X % improvement within Y years
- ◆ -need to celebrate improvements of students (even if not meeting standards)
- ◆ Also need benchmarks for other subjects for 1st and 2nd grade;
-also need regular assessment.
- ◆ Set higher standards for math and reading K-12
- ◆ Return to traditional math program. IMP is too difficult for many students. Flexibility of switching tracks needs to be available for students who aren't successful in their current assignment;
- ◆ Math placement test (aptitude) for math track, especially new students
- ◆ Focus on smaller class size K-3
- ◆ Clarify comprehension component and reading standard at 3rd grade level
- ◆ Data collection on college graduates.
- ◆ Identify, track and support / assess remedial learners (not special ed, but those performing below grade level.

- ◆ Block schedule—payoff vs. cost; junior high / high school choices
- ◆ 8th Grade science WASL curriculum
- ◆ District comprehensive math curriculum review
- ◆ Analyze data to determine disparity between level of performance on 4th and 7th grade WASL.
- ◆ Direct reading instruction needed beyond 4th Grade
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Uniforms might increase academic performance by less distractions.
- ◆ Equal amount of time given to creation science as to evolutionary science.
- ◆ 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?)
- ◆ Commitment to high standards for students while acknowledging and attending to individual differences.
- ◆ Reinforce concept of “Parents as Partners.”
- ◆ Flush the WASL (too subjective)

- ◆ Focus goals to improvement in SAT scores
- ◆ Compare changes in scores from 3rd to 10th and adjust goals accordingly
- ◆ Need to develop plan for special ed. Students who fail at 10th grade.

2. What are the strengths of our current academic programs to meet these standards?

- ◆ Excellent teachers
- ◆ Recognize area of need
- ◆ Full-time reading specialists
- ◆ All-Day kindergarten option
- ◆ Before and after school reading/math programs
- ◆ Class size
- ◆ Primary and intermediate reading intervention specialists
- ◆ Excellent music / fine arts / drama
- ◆ Reading at elementary level
 - smaller class size
 - reading specialists
 - accelerated reader
 - extended day activities
- ◆ Math
 - Mimosa; manipulated; helps with real life
 - math specialist at intermediate
 - accelerated math only at Drum and Evergreen
- ◆ Individual schools take standards seriously
- ◆ Very strong K-4 reading, writing, math resource support (specialists) and improved performance
- ◆ 5th – 7th emphasis and resource support
- ◆ Reading specialists K-9; Math specialists at intermediate schools
- ◆ Summer school achievement academy

- ◆ Collaboration at primary/intermediates (curriculum / assessments)
- ◆ Yearly report to school board by each school
- ◆ Strong staff / very professional
- ◆ Variety of programs to meet student needs
 - co-curricular (strong and inclusive)
 - requires min. GPA to participate (incentive to do well)
- ◆ Curriculum (“We go for rigor”) thorough review
- ◆ Sophomore English Project
- ◆ AP program at CHS
- ◆ Effective Instruction Program
- ◆ Small class size
- ◆ We are methodical in how we develop and align our academic programs from grade to grade;
- ◆ Reading specialist additions are SUPER!
- ◆ Appreciate 90 minute block for individual assistance;
- ◆ Achievement Academy!! Used data to focus intervention!
- ◆ Great Science program –More of it!!
- ◆ Several offerings:
 - (a) paras (b) sped help(c) tutoring CJH/CHS
 - (d) MESA (e) ROTC (f) Arts (g) exceeding state standards
 - (h) Instructor longevity (I) community involvement
- ◆ Reading specialists , at intermediate level especially.
- ◆ Class size reduction at primary level – carry forward to intermediates.
- ◆ Focus on early literacy interventions.

- ◆ Reading specialists in the elementary school
- ◆ Lower class sizes
- ◆ Students teachers add support
- ◆ Practical experiments – hands-on science
- ◆ Instructors are well-trained
- ◆ Instructors care for students
- ◆ Community
- ◆ Size of district creates cohesiveness
- ◆ Offer a rich variety of programs
-co-curricular enhance academic
- ◆ Offering remedial math, reading
- ◆ Honors / Challenge opportunities
- ◆ While strength is evident in meeting standards, what are our intentions to exceed them (ex. What %age?)
- ◆ Specialists (reading, math)
- ◆ Experiences teachers and professional staff development opportunities
- ◆ Class size
- ◆ Grade level breakout is excellent (i.e., K-4, 5-7, 8-9, 10-12)
- ◆ Looping of teachers
- ◆ Very qualified teachers
- ◆ Presence of reading specialists at K-9 levels
- ◆ Sophomore project

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
- ◆ Eliminate whole language
- ◆ Invite pre-school children to grade school library reading sessions
- ◆ Learn/teach to read for information
- ◆ Do not reach for minimum standards of achievement; aim higher in all areas
- ◆ Continued emphasis on spelling
- ◆ Math! Identify gaps; ?teacher comp w/integrated?
- ◆ Science
- ◆ Junior High should not be a warehouse
- ◆ ?Increase graduation requirements (more instructional time); block schedule?
- ◆ ?Class size?
- ◆ Computer program
- ◆ Sophomore paper needs revision
- ◆ Integrated math – POOR. Need remedial help.
- ◆ Articulation between grade levels – better communication and tracking of children between primary-middle-junior-senior high
- ◆ Leave behind African-American males in math
- ◆ Disconnect between math at intermediate and junior high levels

- ◆ Lack of daily homework in math and writing at junior high and high school
- ◆ Block schedule doesn't give daily attention to all subjects
- ◆ 7th – 8th, 9th – 10th transition / continuity of curriculum
- ◆ Math achievement at 10th grade and SAT
- ◆ UW GPA discrepancy with graduating scores. What are we going to do about it?
- ◆ intervention/remediation must start sooner than 3rd grade reading
-assess sooner so adjustment / improvement can occur
- ◆ lower class size at intermediate (and sophomore English; AP classes)
- ◆ Must deal with disparity (male/female; ethnicity)
- ◆ CJH Block schedule (kids too active for longer classes)
- ◆ CHS block schedule (loss of teaching time)
- ◆ More intense for writing
-need better way to evaluate writing at intermediates/CJH/CHS
- ◆ Need better continuity between intermediates/CJH/CHS
-more conversations across grade levels
- ◆ Increase resources at libraries (impacts ability to meet standards)
- ◆ Writing style changes between intermediates/CJH
-need writing continuum K-12; Identify what each grade level needs to do to prepare students for 10th grade project.
- ◆ Need to emphasize Math k-12 (higher level math)
- ◆ Transition from intermediate to JH is difficult
- ◆ Monitoring of academic performance of students who have late arrival / early dismissal needs to be done; No LA or ED for students who need more instructional time.

- ◆ Achievement gaps must be in the foremost thoughts of the Board and Admin. Team;
- ◆ Time on task. Does block schedule need to be reviewed?
- ◆ English needs to be taught every semester.
- ◆ Are AP offerings adequate? Scheduling is a concern for student wanting to take multiple AP classes.
- ◆ Evaluate [whether we are] effectively using 90-minute blocks in secondary education.
- ◆ Above-average learners (not Challenge program) are not pushed.
- ◆ Public speaking – need more instruction and practice.
- ◆ Do we have data to support the integrated math program?
- ◆ More effective writing
- ◆ African-American males in Math;
- ◆ MATH
 - IMP? Keep, modify or kill
 - Maintaining math choices
 - a. assessment paired with choice
 - b. current research for different levels
- ◆ Block schedule
 - Core teaching time
- ◆ Free tutoring
 - MESA
 - library time, paras
- ◆ How do we know if the district-adopted curriculum is being taught in classrooms?
 - intervention for weak links
 - bringing new teachers on board with curriculum

- ◆ Is the adopted curriculum research-based?
- ◆ What is being done for remediation at intermediate / secondary?
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Writing should be consistently taught every year.
- ◆ Emphasis should be given on handwriting and spelling – from lower levels.
- ◆ More global education at earlier grades
- ◆ Cultural education taught from early grades on
- ◆ The block schedule reduces the time students spend in core subject areas
- ◆ Increase the use of common language
- ◆ Lack of continuity of secondary curriculum
- ◆ Smaller learning communities
- ◆ Clearly articulated curriculum (K-12) district –wide, standardization
- ◆ Research-based innovations and strategies for instruction and assessment.
- ◆ Analysis of data re: disparate groups of students
- ◆ Feasibility of entry-level assessment (new students, all students)
- ◆ Lack of coordination between CJH/CHS; correlation needs to be more direct in all academic areas (math seems to be a major gap).
- ◆ Need to reprioritize class selection to assure core skills are adequately offered and not lower in priority than some electives.

- ◆ Need to focus efforts on writing skills to more closely align with college levels.

4. What other ideas should we consider as we are working on these standards/goals?

- ◆ Teach basic math facts.
- ◆ Different teacher for different learning style (not by grade Junior high on)
- ◆ Students that excel need more options
- ◆ More writing at early age
- ◆ Solicit student and college input
- ◆ 180 day math tracking model – daily homework K-12; +80% mastery
- ◆ Support homework efforts for disadvantaged students
 - study halls during day
 - after school homework clubs
- ◆ Hire an inspirational math/science African-American male teacher
- ◆ Require more reading at 8-12; one book per week; involve parents
- ◆ Involve and communicate with parents
- ◆ Writing required in every class!!
- ◆ Consider 8-12th campus with North and South campus; 8th grade wing; one oversight principal
- ◆ Peer tutoring programs? (After school – 1 hour, catch late bus)
- ◆ Use individual information from testing to set teacher-parent-student goal
- ◆ Amount of time in core subjects, i.e., everyday six 1-hour classes.

- ◆ Family communication issues (k-12)
 - how to improve communication from school to parents?
 - need to provide more options / help to parents
 - need to bolster parents—positive input – celebrate family success
 - find ways to communicate so parents accept input

- ◆ look at additional ways to evaluate students (beyond standardized tests)
 - does this honestly evaluate students?

- ◆ Grades at CHS may not accurately reflect actual work performance, i.e., grade inflation.

- ◆ May need to increase credits required to graduate.

- ◆ How can technology be used to help.

- ◆ Trade-offs must be considered, i.e., taking AP courses will limit number of electives. Students who need remedial help might not be allowed to take a lot of electives.

- ◆ Students who don't meet the standards should not be permitted to take less than a full load.

- ◆ More critical thinking at all grade levels.

- ◆ Strengthen pre-K and community outreach.

- ◆ More interaction with non-fiction at K-4 level

- ◆ Staff development / assistance for at-risk or students struggling academically.

- ◆ Address cheating, plagiarism from K-12 (promoted by integrated math)

- ◆ Grading on daily work:
 - completion not content – Needs to change!
 - collected AND read

- ◆ Student accountability

- ◆ Core classes
 - Also offer elective (enrichment) after school
 - send out well rounded students

- ◆ How will we address AYP issues, specifically regarding special ed, ELL?
- ◆ Educate staff and community regarding AYP and what it means for USPD
- ◆ Grade inflation, especially at high school
- ◆ How do we address diversity issues – we need a plan
- ◆ Educate our community about the changing “face” of USPD
- ◆ Involving parents as partners in the educational process
- ◆ Consistent curriculum alignment K-12; scope and sequence and research-based
- ◆ Can schedules be rearranged to have better use of time so more math and English can be taught?
- ◆ Raise level of math curriculum to a higher level.
- ◆ Introduce language at an earlier age because they learn it more easily and have more time to do it.
- ◆ School assemblies (like Sunset) develop a sense of community and a sense of achievement.
- ◆ Continue /encourage to set higher standards than the WASL.
- ◆ More memorization (develop brain)
- ◆ More rigor in reading, writing, math
- ◆ How will we fund...
- ◆ How will we staff...
- ◆ How will we assess...
Our commitment to these district standards?
- ◆ Emphasis on learning; avoid making the WASL a “monster.” Incorporate learnings into daily teaching (for WASL).
- ◆ Consider changing the hours of operation at the high school (body clock)

- ◆ Revisit or at least consider changing block schedule at CJH / CHS
- ◆ Conduct outside visits or peer reviews with other districts
- ◆ Assure that out-of-district students are really accepted based on legitimate criteria (address, etc.) or consider not allowing out-of-district students, allowing internal students priority in class selection.