

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 303
SCHOOL BOARD STUDY SESSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: January 25, 2011

Place: Bainbrdige High School Commons

Board of Directors Present

Board President Patty Fielding

Board Vice-President Mary Curtis

Directors - John Tawresey, Mike Spence, Tim Kinkead

Call to Order

5:37 p.m. – Board President Patty Fielding called the study session to order.

Study Session: Optional Programs Proposal

Board President Patty Fielding welcomed folks to the study session and reviewed the structure for the meeting, which began with a thirty minute review of the information about the proposed options program presented to date. Public comment regarding the proposed options program would be taken at the conclusion of the presentation. President Fielding reviewed the events and activities that led to the scheduling of a study session. They included: 1) Communication that had been less than ideal around the Bainbridge Island Learning Committee proposal. 2) Confusion about what's been going on with the proposal and what decisions have been made. 3) Parent and staff concerns about costs, equity, access, and a number of other issues related to this proposal. 4) Assurance that the same information is shared about both content and process of the BI Learning Community proposal. 5) The District and Board need to hear community feedback in order to make good decisions. Regarding "what's next," President Fielding noted the study session was designed to give folks increased information about optional programs, as well as a chance to express concerns, ask questions, offer ideas, and seek clarification or further information. Key points and concerns from the evening's discussion will be captured and summarized. Information gathered during the study session will help to inform board members as they hear the formal options program proposal, discuss that proposal, and review the district analysis completed to date at the January 27th school board meeting. At this meeting, the board will make a decision about whether the proposal will move forward "as is" or whether revisions need to be made under which the district will determine feasibility and return to the board with a final proposal. Finally, it was noted that at the January 27th meeting, additional public comment will be heard before any decision will be made.

Superintendent Faith Chapel provided a brief history of how options programs were developed in the district including those proposed by district staff and those brought to the district by community groups. Examples of optional programs in the district included Strawberry Hill Alternative School (1972), a proposal for a "Family Classroom" Program (1995), and Commodore Options (opened in September 1996). Ms. Chapel noted the options programs currently implemented in the district include Eagle Harbor High School, Odyssey 1-8, Mosaic Program, Online Learning, All-Day Kindergarten, Sakai World Language Rosetta Stone Program, and preschool programs. Following Ms. Chapel's presentation, Associate Superintendent Julie Goldsmith explained the background and timeline related to the current options proposal. It was noted that enrollment for the 2010-11 Odyssey Program resulted in a waiting list of 125 families. In June 2010, parents on the waiting list for Odyssey approached the district about the possibility of an expanded program. In September 2010, the Bainbridge Island Learning Community (BILC) presented their ideas to the Board of Directors and started development of an options program proposal. A committee comprised of teachers, principals and BILC representatives met in October to create draft guidelines and a process for options programs proposals. Those draft guidelines were

presented to the Board of Directors in November and December for review. The BILC proposal, along with the district analysis of that proposal, was presented to the Board at their January 13th meeting. As a result of community input at the January 13th board meeting, a study session was scheduled to gather additional input regarding the options program proposal.

After going through the timeline of activities leading to the study session, Ms. Goldsmith reviewed the District principles for options programs that had been developed. The principles included: 1) Goals congruent with district vision, mission, goals and core curriculum. 2) Open to all students. 3) Optional alternatives. 4) Funded and staffed comparable to all schools. 5) Sited on a space available basis. 6) Evaluated annually. 7) Leadership of a district administrator. 8) Developed in cooperation with district and/or community stakeholders. 9) Assignment of staff members based on CBA. 10) Encourages innovation and allows for flexibility. In addition, the guidelines for development of optional programs were shared, and included the following: 1) Development of rationale for need and objectives. 2) Prepare evidence of interest and commitment. 3) Planning responsibility shared among parents, students and staff. The administration and supervision of the program is the responsibility of District leadership. 4) Other than start-up, budget commensurate with current per pupil costs. 5) All new programs reviewed annually (enrollment, student achievement, costs). Once a proposal is developed, the process for submitting it to the District would follow these steps: 1) Proposal submitted to Superintendent. 2) District staff analyzes the proposal considering cost, staffing, space available and contractual impacts. 3) Communication with the Board of Directors regarding the proposal would be ongoing. 4) Evidence of initial interest would be prepared. 5) The Board of Directors reviews the proposal and rejects it or requests modifications. 6) A final decision by the Board is made at a public meeting. 7) Implementation of the options program begins.

Ms. Goldsmith noted that the district was on step five in the proposal process. After listening to the community input taken at the study session, and at the school board meeting scheduled for Thursday (January 27), the Board will review the proposal and request revisions or make recommendations. The district will then work with the Wilkes community (PTO and staff) to develop the proposal to work on the Wilkes campus. There will be an open enrollment process to determine student numbers. It was noted that Kindergarten registration is important as that enrollment determines the number of classrooms needed next year at each school. Once enrollment numbers have been finalized, and cost and system impacts have been analyzed, the information will be presented to the Board of Directors for a final decision – probably in April or May.

An overview of the district's analysis of the options program under consideration was presented. Ms. Goldsmith provided a breakdown of the proposal's alignment to the guiding principles, as well as the district systems implications related to location (Wilkes vs. Commodore), staffing (impact on specialists, counseling, etc.), possible revenue, transportation and start-up costs. The ongoing implications included an annual program evaluation, and the need for the BILC to work on developing relationships with the Wilkes community.

Following Ms. Goldsmith's presentation, Board President Patty Fielding opened the floor to public input. Over thirty-two citizens signed up to speak regarding the proposed options program (a list of those citizens is available upon request). In addition, several citizens submitted letters to the Board in support or in opposition of the proposal. (Copies of the letters submitted for public record are available upon request.) Citizen comments expressing opposition to the proposal focused on the following: a) timing of the proposal considering the crisis in education funding and forthcoming budget reductions; b) district exit strategy if new program is unsuccessful; c) objection to "founding fathers" clause in proposal – should be lottery; d) lack of public information about the proposal; e) evidence of guarantees regarding enrollment; f) questions about the financial analysis related to the costs of the program. Citizen comments expressing support of the proposal focused on the following: a) provides other options for students; b) success of the Odyssey Program and interest in expansion; c) support of individual learning plans; d) private school

students coming into the district based on the availability of an options program; e) support for the “founding fathers” clause based on the BILC commitment to making the program a success; f) support for “teacher looping” and projects-based learning.

At the conclusion of the public comment, President Fielding and the other Board members thanked those in attendance for their input, adding that it had been an incredible experience. The comments had been thoughtful and caring, with all folks focused on support of students. It was noted that Board members will continue to take comments and looked forward to a discussion at the January 27th school board meeting.

Adjournment

8:28 p.m. – President Fielding adjourned the meeting.