

Bainbridge Island School District
Gr. K-6 Educational Programs & Innovation Committee (EPI)
September 25, 2012

Context

Educational trends and innovation

A decade ago, the Bainbridge Island School District formed a High School Study Committee to address changes in state graduation requirements and discuss secondary educational trends that were prevalent, at that time, in both state and national conversations related to education reform. Recommendations that emerged from that committee led to a revision of district policies and graduation requirements and provided the foundation for the formation of Eagle Harbor High School. In the 1980's and 90's, the District reviewed middle level programs and made changes to address the needs of young adolescents.

We believe the District can benefit from placing a similar focus on our elementary and intermediate level programs. The formation of a program and innovation committee would provide a forum for discussion of emerging research, technological and curricular changes, and educational trends that are driving changes in the education of students in Gr. K-6. In recent years, it has also become clear that parents within our community have a high degree of interest in considering innovation and adaptive change in these grades, and we have many talented and knowledgeable educators who have creative and innovative ideas.

District process for implementing change

During the past two years, it has also become clear that the District would benefit from establishing a framework that delineates the process for programmatic or innovative change. Recent discussions about the expansion of multiage programs and the initiation of a pilot project for Spanish Immersion have indicated the need for clarification of district policies, procedures, and decision-making processes.

Implications for Changes in Gr. K-6 Educational Programs

Purpose for considering change

The primary purpose for considering changes to the District's educational programs is to provide the students of Bainbridge Island with the highest quality educational opportunities in alignment with the district's mission, vision, and guiding principles. Despite current economic challenges, it is important for the District to continue to adapt its programs to fit the changing landscape of educational research, technological innovation, curriculum requirements, and local priorities and needs.

Resource implications

During recent years, the district has significantly reduced operating costs of infrastructure and non-teaching services and operations in order to focus district resources, to the greatest extent possible, on the classroom and the educational programs and services that directly impact student learning. As it considers possible changes, it will be important for the District to continually refine its priorities in order to direct available resources to the programs and services that are of the highest value.

Charge to the Committee

The School Board charge to the committee is twofold: (1) to establish a district framework that delineates the process for programmatic or innovative change, and (2) to consider relevant research and emerging trends in K-6 education that are aligned with the District's mission, vision, and guiding principles. It is expected that the committee will bring to the School Board a recommended set of proposals to be considered for implementation.

Factors to be Considered

Economic Challenges

Like all districts in Washington State, the Bainbridge Island School District has experienced five years of cumulative reductions in state funding. However, unlike many other districts, Bainbridge Island has been able to largely maintain the educational programs, services, and opportunities that directly impact student learning. To do this, the district has employed numerous strategies including deep cuts to non-teaching services such as transportation, central administration, and custodial/maintenance. It has also requested and received significant additional support from the community through the Bainbridge Schools Foundation, Parent-Teaching Organizations, Educational Programs and Operations Levies, a Technology Levy, and a Capital Facilities Bond. As the district looks to the future, it appears unlikely that state budget allocations for K-12 education will dramatically increase within the next few years.

Demographic trends

During the past 7 years, the District has experienced a decline in enrollment, and a recent demographic study indicates that this trend is likely to continue for the next several years and then level off. In order for the District to continue attracting families with school-age children it is essential that we offer world class programs.

Staffing, programs and facilities

Any discussion of educational programs and innovation must also take into account the implications for staffing, existing programs and facilities, and the availability of equipment and space. Additionally, consideration must be given to the costs that would be associated with making changes. Certain programs require specialized staff or facilities (e.g. special education, science, music, art, etc.).

Competing values

The Bainbridge Island School District has historically sought to provide a balance between two competing values: (1) the desire to provide all students with the highest quality educational opportunities, and (2) the desire to provide choice, recognizing that not all students learn in the same way and students have different talents, interests and needs. The desire to provide a balanced approach has led to the development of options programs, some which are at capacity and have limited access. It will be important for the K-6 Educational Program and Innovation Committee to weigh the issues of equity and choice as it considers possible changes in educational programs and the process for making decisions about implementing or expanding programs.

Sustainability

As the committee considers programmatic change, it will be important to consider long-term implications. A key factor in formulating recommendations will be whether programs can be sustained over time.

Committee Tasks and Responsibilities

The Elementary Educational Programs and Innovation Committee is being asked to accomplish a number of tasks:

1. Consider relevant research regarding best practice and educational trends that enhance student learning in Grades K-6.
2. Consider curricular and technological changes that are driving changes in the education of elementary and intermediate level students.
3. Consider innovative practices and programs in elementary education that are being implemented in other locations.
4. Consider local priorities and needs for adaptive change.
5. Review existing policies and procedures related to programmatic or innovative change.
6. Formulate recommendations for revision of policies, procedures and decision-making processes.

Proposed Committee Composition

- District administrators (2)
- School administrators (2)
- Parents and community members (6)
- Certificated staff (5)
- Classified staff (1)
- Ex-Officio School Board representatives (2)

Proposed Timeline

The Gr. K-6 Educational Programs and Innovation Committee (EPI) is expected to present its recommendations to the School Board in the spring of 2013. The Board will receive regular updates of EPI work during the 2012-13 school year.

- Determine committee composition October 2012

- Committee meetings to be held 12:30-5:00 pm on Thursdays (specific dates to be determined) Fall 2012-Spring2013

Proposed number of meetings for 2012-13:

- ✓ November (1 meetings)
 - ✓ December (1 meeting)
 - ✓ January (1 meetings)
 - ✓ February (1 meetings)
 - ✓ March (1 meetings)
 - ✓ April (1 meeting)
 - ✓ May (1 meetings)
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- 2 community outreach meetings to be held in 2012-13 school year Fall 2012 -Spring 2013