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## Clark County Schools Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Thursday, November 30, 2023 – 10:30-11:30am

**Members/Alternates Present:** Sue Marshall, Clark County Council; John Anzalone, Camas School District; Kimberly Armstrong, Evergreen School District; Chris Griffith, Ridgefield School District; Mary Templeton, Washougal School District; Bridget McLeman, Neighborhood Associations Council of Clark County; Jill Walters, CREDC; J. Kimberly Walker-Norton, County Services

**Staff, Presenters, Special Guests:** Jordan Boege, Clark County Manager's Office; Oliver Orjiako, Jenna Kay and Amy Wooten, Clark County Community Planning; LeAnne Bremer, Miller Nash

**Members/Alternates Absent:** Battle Ground School District, Green Mountain School District, Hockinson School District, La Center School District, Woodland School District, Vancouver School District, EOCF, Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance, Washington State University – Vancouver; ESD 112

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

- April 2023 meeting notes: adopted

### 2. Legislative Priorities

- Jordan Boege, Senior Policy Analyst for the Clark County Council, shared Council priority legislative areas, including:
  - Housing/Homelessness
    - Affordable housing
    - Incentivizing development
    - Supporting residents purchasing mobile/manufactured home parks
    - Funding to support county implementation of HB 1110
    - Increase accessible, affordable housing and support services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
    - Supporting co-responder programs
  - Infrastructure/Development
    - Broadband access and connectivity
    - Multimodal transportation
    - Supporting 179<sup>th</sup> interchange and I-5 connector in Ridgefield, among other projects
  - Indigent Defense/Public Safety
    - State funding for indigent defense
    - Jail capital funding
    - Behavioral health programs
  - Lake Management
    - Lacamas and Vancouver lakes
- Mary Templeton, Superintendent of the Washougal School District, shared school district

priority legislative areas, including:

- A theme of gratitude and belief:
  - When we are all out in community, when public education comes up, can we agree to think positively about public education and its successes and the fact that most people were products of public education and wouldn't be where we are today without public education? Belief doesn't cost any money.
  - The school districts are grateful for the last legislative session and investments in public education, such as funding for special education. The school districts will continue to ask for investment to close gaps in what the state provides and the actual cost to provide special education and other areas of education.
  - During the last legislative session, the school districts also received mental health wellness support to help with challenging and complex work of supporting students and staff. Most of the school districts are the largest employers in their communities and staff count on the districts for their mental and financial wellness.
- Another theme is hopeful:
  - We all hear a narrative that public education that it hasn't, we didn't, and we can't. School districts believe we have, we can, and we are. We are hopeful because every single day we have wonderful things happening in our classrooms. Our challenge is how do we communicate better the great things that happen every day?
  - Yesterday I [Superintendent Templeton] was in a high school where Camas and Washougal high school students were volunteering for a food drive. I asked a student "why do you volunteer?" He said, "well if you needed something, wouldn't you want someone to help you?"
  - Thank you to those who are hoping and sharing good and hopeful news.
- Another theme is: closing gaps.
  - Opportunity gaps. One detail for my school district [Washougal], we have one of the highest on time graduation rates we've ever had as we work collectively together. In one of our elementary schools which is a high poverty school, we had a 27% increase in math scores in one year. That's not unique to one building. That's collective work together. We are closing the opportunity gap.
  - The funding gap priorities are focused on four things:
    - The prototypical funding model, the legislative function that says this is how many teachers a school building needs and custodians, etc. is inadequate. It isn't giving districts the amount of teachers they need or classified personnel ( i.e. bus drivers, secretaries, etc.). In the collective districts, we have about a 50% discrepancy in classified positions and what the state provides. We also have the increasing cost of doing business in today's economy. The average insurance cost for a school district liability had a 32% increase in one year and the state increased its funding for that by 3.1%. You can see the large gap in the funding for operating cost in today's economy.
    - Special education. Many districts rely heavily on local dollars to support students with special needs. School districts are asking the state to help more.

- School facilities. School Districts are not only concerned about how to build schools, but also how to maintain schools and facilities.
  - Bonds and levies. It's common that capital bonds and levies do not pass.
- We [the school districts] are managing very complex organizations. Together when we think about doing work and intersecting, that makes the work doable. We are eager to partner and talk positively about our great news and eager to articulate clearly where our challenges are and how we can work to overcome those. We ask that we have a positive belief in public education at the grocery store, backyard get together, etc.
- Discussion included:
  - A desire to look for intersections to support each other.
  - A desire to speak about positive examples of public education.
  - County decisions related to growth and development can impact school districts and districts struggle to pass levy and bond measures. The school districts' shared that bonds are particularly challenging as they require a supermajority. Bonds that fail typically hit the 50% mark, but not the 60% supermajority mark. The school districts would be interested in county support on legislation that would change bond measures from requiring a supermajority to requiring majority support.

### 3. Comprehensive Plan 2025 Periodic Update

- Jenna Kay and Oliver Orjiako, with Clark County Community Planning, provided updates on the county's comprehensive planning periodic update project.
- First, staff provided a high level overview of the project, including a timeline of the work phases to take place before the final due date of June 30, 2025. The comprehensive plan update will focus on the planning period of 2025-2045.
  - Phase 1, Project initiation: so far, the County Council has made some key planning decisions including the population and employment projections that will be used countywide for the 20-year planning period. Their next decision will be about how those population numbers will be allocated to each urban growth area and the rural area.
  - Phase 2, Shape the plan: starting in 2024, the environmental impact statement process will begin, scoping the project and considering growth alternatives.
  - Phase 3, Review and refine: in late 2024 and early 2025, a preferred growth alternative will be selected and final drafts will be developed of all key planning documents.
  - Phase 4, Adoption process: the adoption process is scheduled for the spring of 2025.
- Second, highlights on school-related items were discussed, including:
  - Capital Facilities Plans: school districts' capital facilities will need to be updated and adopted by reference as part of the periodic update. Staff will work with LeAnne Bremer on the specific timeline, but, in general, school districts will need to submit their updated capital facilities plans to the county in 2024. Those would go to the Planning Commission and then County Council for review by spring of 2025, becoming effective after adoption mid-year 2025. There was discussion on school capital facilities plans that were recently updated. Oliver Orjiako shared that the school districts should see what preferred growth alternative is selected

and then decide if they need to update their capital facilities plans. If no updates are needed, a school district can resubmit its existing capital facilities plan.

- Schools Chapter: the county's comprehensive plan has a schools chapter in it. This is an optional element in the county's comprehensive plan and the school districts were very involved in its development. The chapter includes background information on schools in the county as well as goals and policies related to schools and growth management, especially around facility needs. Staff will be reviewing the chapter in 2024, and revising it if needed. Staff is interested in identifying reviewers from the school districts to help provide feedback. Members of the public will also have an opportunity to share their feedback. Once the county has revised text in early 2025, it will then go to the Planning Commission and County Council for consideration. **ACTION ITEM:** staff to share a link to the schools chapter with the group.
- Third, new Growth Management Act legislation changes related to housing and climate change were highlighted that could impact school district planning.
  - In 2021, [House Bill 1220 \(2021\)](#) amended the Growth Management Act (GMA) to instruct local governments to “plan for and accommodate” housing affordable to all income levels. This significantly strengthened the previous goal, which was to encourage affordable housing.
  - The amended law also directed the Department of Commerce to project future housing needs for jurisdictions by income bracket and made significant updates to how jurisdictions are to plan for housing in the housing element of their comprehensive plans. These new changes to local housing elements include:
    - Planning for sufficient land capacity for housing needs, including all economic segments of the population (moderate, low, very low and extremely low income, as well as emergency housing and permanent supportive housing).
    - Providing for moderate density housing options within Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), including but not limited to duplexes, triplexes and townhomes.
    - Making adequate provisions for housing for existing and projected needs for all economic segments of the community, including documenting programs and actions needed to achieve housing availability.
    - Identifying racially disparate impacts, displacement and exclusion in housing policies and regulations, and beginning to undo those impacts; and identifying areas at higher risk of displacement and establishing anti-displacement policies.
  - Discussion included:
    - Since the cities and county will be working to implement this legislation at the same time, will you be communicating what you're thinking with the cities? We all sit within Clark County, but Washougal is a Tier 3 and has different requirements compared to a district like Evergreen. What you're doing is that which is outside of city jurisdiction is impacting additional housing opportunity within and outside of city limits. If addressing income level potentially brings children to the school district. Understand everyone on same timeline? The bill 1110 requires the cities of

Vancouver, Camas, and Washougal to plan for housing types. We coordinate with them. They are also separately looking at how to fulfill the intent of the law. Beginning next year, we will do the allocation so they will each know the number of housing units to plan for. Up to each jurisdiction to determine how to provide that. The coordination is happening.

- Many school districts have multiple jurisdictions. May be multiple approaches to this.
- During the 2023 legislative session, a climate change planning bill was passed, [House Bill 1181](#), that adds a climate change and resiliency goal to the Growth Management Act and requires Clark County and its cities to add climate elements to their comprehensive plans. Staff will be spending much of 2024 doing the work to develop the climate element for the county and are interested in staying connected with the school districts on this topic. One, county staff may need to request some data from school districts, to assist with items such as a greenhouse gas inventory and a vulnerability and risk assessment. County staff also want to make sure youth perspective is included in this work. For instance, there is a youth representative position on an advisory group as part of this project. Staff are also happy to connect with school groups or classes, if the school districts would like to collaborate in any way for youth to share their ideas on this topic.
- Could be requirements or grant opportunities for schools to plan for energy efficiency. There could be opportunities that exist because of the funding. We may connect with your operations/facilities managers as part of the planning team. We could see new policies affecting your facilities and how you build in the future. Do you have the correct facilities contacts for each district? **ACTION ITEM:** staff to email each district to confirm current facilities manager contacts.
- Finally, county Community Planning Director and/or staff are available to connect with school districts, youth and families to provide opportunities to share feedback on any of the topics covered in the plan. School staff can contact Jenna Kay at [jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov](mailto:jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov) or 564-397-4968 if they want to connect.

#### 4. Other

- Jill Walters, CREDC: Thank you for explaining the thoughts on we're hear and planning for the future. Really broad relationships and partnerships. I say that from an economic development perspective. We also have to be thoughtful and work with our county on the correct and right balance of housing projects and savings of land for businesses that want to come to our region. Businesses looking to come or expand in our region offer opportunities for employment. Our schools are developing our next workforce and it would be nice if they could stay in the region. Economic development opportunities in the county with the schools and county.

#### 5. Debrief

- The group confirmed that two meetings per year seemed like a good frequency.
- The group confirmed interest in hearing updates on the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan project as it progresses.
- The group confirmed interest in a brief debrief of the legislative session at the spring

meeting.

- The group confirmed interest in the spring meeting focusing on development updates and the fall meeting focusing on legislative priorities.

**6. Next steps and Action items**

- County staff will share a link to the county's current Comprehensive Plan Schools' Chapter.
- County staff to email each district to confirm current facilities manager contacts.
- County staff will schedule two meetings for 2024.
- County staff will be in contact with school districts at key points over the next year to coordinate on the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan project.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30am.