



June 10, 2015

Dow Constantine, King County Executive
 Fred Jarrett, Deputy County Executive
 516 Third Ave
 Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mr. Constantine and Mr. Jarrett:

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about disproportionality, the early start initiative and the facilities for juveniles in detention:

Disproportionality – King County is to be commended for the attention given to reducing juvenile detention for students – particularly students of color. Seattle Public Schools have been working on disproportionality issues for several years. Although we have a long way to go, some positive signs are:

- Title I low income schools have made steady progress and have moved 10% above state average;
- Eight schools have been identified as out performing in closing gaps;
- All schools have set school improvement goals to reduce opportunity gaps for students of color;
- Seattle is closing gaps for disproportional discipline more quickly than most other districts;
- Many of our SE schools (Rainier Beach, Mercer Middle) have been recognized for their dramatic turnaround; and
- Two dozen initiatives, including several for community based engagement, are underway (see attached).

Thank you for the invitation to be a part of the County steering committee to do joint problem solving around issues of disproportionality. With all of the internal Seattle Schools initiatives I am not able to commit to attend all of your steering committee meetings, I will attend as I am able and will be pleased to share Seattle Public School's work. I would be pleased to participate in this work.

Early Start Initiative – Commendations to the County for identifying early intervention initiatives that, over the long term, will make the biggest difference in reducing disproportionality. These research based interventions will pay huge dividends in the years to come – providing positive outcomes for individuals and communities county-wide.

Detention Facilities – For several decades, King County has provided two kinds of detention facilities – overnight and day-time. My understanding is that King County has included overnight detention facilities but not day-time facilities in the rebuilding of the County Courthouse.

The County has consistently asked to transfer the long standing county facility cost to the school district. The school district has been equally consistent over the past 18 months in declining to pick up detention facility costs.

In my December 2014 and January 2015 letters to the County Executive and the King County Council, we offered to work together with the County to obtain State funding for the day-time detention facility. The district also stands ready to continue providing educational services for juvenile detention – however we have been reluctant to pick up a long standing county commitment for facility expenses.

Following our meeting in your office, we have determined that about 1/3 of the 90 students served in day-time detention at Alder are there by court order. We also note that the county is reducing their overnight count from 70 to 50; and assume that the reduced number will likely be sentenced instead to our day-time program. The Alder students not there by court order are there either to protect them from others (gangs) or to insure that they do not harm others (sex offenders). Finally, we rely on a certain number of students to make the staffing work (math, science, language, trades) and need the security provided by the county. We also rely on a federal grant of about \$150,000.

It would seem that the county's reduction in the number of overnight space should free up construction funds for the day time program. We could continue to argue that all of the students are either ordered by the court or students that would not otherwise be in our schools. Without a secure facility we would be unable to serve them. They would remain on the streets and likely reoffend until sentenced. However, in the interest of slowing the prison pipeline, I would propose to you and to the Seattle School Board a 50/50 division of the \$2M cost. Seattle Public Schools would need the equivalent to a deed for the space and an extended year payment plan (10 years @ \$100,000 per year).

Thank you for talking with us as we work toward solutions to address the disproportionate numbers of students of color in juvenile detention facilities.

Best regards,



Larry Nyland
Superintendent