



Northwest Center
People of all abilities

NORTHWEST CENTER MOVING CLOSER TO SOLUTION

March 7, 2014 -- It has been only 60 days since Seattle Public Schools shocked our families and the entire community by giving Northwest Center Kids 6 months to vacate North Queen Anne Elementary where this critically important and innovative program has thrived for 28 years.

Northwest Center's highly motivated and engaged parents, its professional staff, its Board of Directors, and its many supporters in the community immediately rallied and began an exhaustive search for alternatives. Several options have now emerged, including a potential permanent home as well as two workable short-term contingency sites. There is still much work to be done in the way of due diligence and negotiation, and none of these options has yet been finalized. But we are moving closer to solving this problem.

Now we expect Seattle Public Schools to be flexible and work with Northwest Center to extend its occupancy of North Queen Anne Elementary by the few months needed to effect an orderly transition. After all, Seattle Public Schools created this completely unnecessary crisis by not involving Northwest Center in its planning process earlier and by not being transparent about plans for North Queen Anne Elementary when we asked them directly in October, 2012.

Today Tom Everill and Robin Krueger of Northwest Center met with Superintendent Banda and key members of his staff along with Representative Reuven Carlyle to discuss options. The meeting was positive and productive, but so far Seattle Public Schools has not made any commitment to be flexible or to give Northwest Center the few extra months it needs to finalize its solutions and move its program.

All parties have agreed to meet again in approximately two weeks after Northwest Center has finalized its options to plan the transition in more detail.

Tom Everill says, "We did not create this crisis, but we will solve it. Northwest Center has worked very hard to find solutions, and some interesting options have emerged. All we have ever asked from Seattle Public Schools is transparency, collaboration, and adequate time to design an orderly transition. So far, all of these have been in short supply. But we are at least talking now, which is a hopeful sign. The energy and commitment of our parents is amazing, as is the outpouring of support from the public and elected officials. Now we expect Seattle Public Schools to work with us."

Northwest Center offers essential support to people with developmental disabilities at all stages of life through early intervention, inclusive classrooms, employment services, and jobs. When people of all abilities learn and work together, everyone benefits. Learn more at www.nwcenter.org

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