

Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force Meeting
Monday, March 21, 2016
6:00 – 8:00pm
EducationCounsel (101 Constitution Avenue NW)

Attendees

Co-Chairs:

- Jennifer Niles | Deputy Mayor for Education
- Anthony Williams | CEO & Executive Director, Federal City Council; former Mayor

Facilitator:

- Jim Sandman | President, Legal Services Corporation; former General Counsel, DCPS

Members:

- Amanda Alexander | Deputy Chief of Elementary Schools, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Lars Beck | CEO, Scholar Academies and DC Scholars
- Evelyn Boyd Simmons | Francis-Stevens parent; W2 Education Network; former member, Student Assignment Committee; President, Logan Circle Community Association
- Charlene Drew-Jarvis | Graduate, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS); Senior Advisor, KIPP DC PCS; former Ward 4 City Councilwoman
- Caryn Ernst | Watkins ES, Stuart-Hobson MS parent; former PTA president, Capitol Hill Cluster School; member, Capitol Hill Public School Parent Organization (CHPSPO)
- Kaya Henderson | Chancellor, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Kemba Hendrix | Elsie Whitlow Stokes PCS parent; former public and public charter school teacher
- Irene Holtzman | Executive Director, Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS)
- Faith Hubbard | Chief Student Advocate, State Board of Education (SBOE); former member, Student Assignment Committee
- Hanseul Kang | State Superintendent of Education
- Melissa Kim | Chief Academic Officer, Secondary Schools, KIPP DC; former principal, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Anjali Kulkarni | Deputy Chief, Strategic School Planning, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Bethany Little | Murch ES, BASIS PCS parent; Education policy expert
- Alejandra Vallejo | Bancroft ES parent; Chair, Bancroft ES Local School Advisory Team (LSAT)
- Karen Williams | Ward 7 Representative, State Board of Education (SBOE)
- Darren Woodruff | EL Haynes PCS, Benjamin Banneker HS parent ; Chair, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)

Members on the Phone:

- Erika Harrell | DC Prep PCS parent; Member, MySchoolDC Parent Advisory Council; member, DC School Reform Now; member, PCSB Parent & Alumni Leadership Council (PALC)
- Emily Lawson | Founder & CEO, DC Prep PCS

Members Not in Attendance:

- Rod Boggs | Executive Director, Washington Lawyer's Committee
- Shanita Burney | Deputy Chief, Community Engagement, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)

- Angela Copeland | Stuart-Hobson MS parent; public affairs specialist
- Scott Pearson | Executive Director, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)
- Ariana Quiñones | Duke Ellington HS, Cesar Chavez PCS parent, education and human services policy consultant, Otero Strategy Group LLC, former member Student Assignment Committee
- Shantelle Wright | Founder & CEO, Achievement Prep PCS; Chair, DC Association of Public Charter Schools

Staff:

- Jennifer Comey | Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Erin Garratt | Public Policy Fellow, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Amy Lerman | Senior Policy Advisor, MySchoolDC (MSDC) team, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Claudia Luján | Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Kristen Moore | DLP Fellow, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Aaron Parrott | Data Manager, MySchoolDC (MSDC) team, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Richelle Russell | Education Pioneers Fellow, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Naomi Watson | Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Margie Yeager | Chief of Staff, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)

Support Team:

- Amber Saddler | EducationCounsel, LLC
- Nick Spiva | EducationCounsel, LLC
- Terri Taylor | EducationCounsel, LLC

Meeting Summary

Welcome

Scott Palmer, Managing Partner and Co-Founder of EducationCounsel, welcomed the Task Force to their space.

Task Force Goals, Group Norms & Expectations

While they were not explicitly discussed, the Task Force goals, group norms and expectations were again shown to the members as a reminder of the purpose and importance of the work of the committee. Facilitator notes that based on feedback from the February Task Force meeting, one additional group norm/expectation was added - “Put individual agendas aside in the interest of improving public education.”

Follow-up to Education Landscape Data

Following the February meeting, members were asked to complete an online form noting what surprised them from the education landscape data and fact sheets, what data they feel is missing and what were some of the myths/perceptions/misconceptions of our education system. DME staff reviewed the summary of responses received and the timeline for responding to the data requests.

DME staff notes that the online form soliciting reactions and comments from members will remain open so additional data requests can be submitted.

Focus Group Feedback

DME fellow, Erin Garratt, reviewed the summary of focus group feedback. She noted that a more in-depth and detailed report on the focus groups will be shared next month. Erin noted the following during the presentation of slides:

- Focus groups attracted nearly 200 registrants; of those who signed up, more than 50% (~100 people) attended.
- Demographic information was not collected on participants. The only data point collected was ward of residence. For future engagement opportunities collecting sector or school affiliation would be helpful.
- While individual focus groups sometimes had stronger representation from one sector, ward, or point of view, overall, both sectors were generally equally represented when looking at all participants.
- Of the information that was gathered, public comments were largely contained to three main areas—accountability, coordinated planning, and transparency.
- Of the information gathered through discussions, the following key takeaways were proposed:
 - Parents and community members are concerned with creating quality in all schools;
 - The goals of the Task Force resonate with members of the public;
 - Tangible and impactful results are needed;
 - Stronger outreach efforts (particularly for W8) are important for future community meetings;
 - The Task Force must identify ways of responding to perceptions and misconceptions about both sectors.

Members' commentary and questions:

- Where does financial transparency fall on the "What We Heard" slide? Staff noted that while financial transparency came up in some of the discussions it didn't rise to the top across most discussions. The full report will capture the discussion where this issue was flagged. Member proposed including this under the Transparency category.
- Were there any definitive "bottom lines"? What does "accountability" mean? DME staff responded that though there wasn't any consensus on specific accountability measures, this notion was brought up multiple times across multiple focus groups. More than that, however, was the sentiment that there need to be more measures of accountability in both public school sectors.
- What are the steps going forward, specifically regarding outreach efforts? DME staff noted that among other methods and additional focus groups/community meetings, there is the possibility of conducting online surveys and questionnaires.
- Online surveys aren't meeting people where they are and the DME needs to go to PTAs, ANCs, civic association meetings, and ward-based education councils (among others) in order to get more robust feedback.

- At the focus groups, most participants had a sector affiliation (e.g. teachers, those who work in education policy, etc.) and therefore, had a specific side. It is important to try harder to reach parents and community members that don't have a direct affiliation.

EducationCounsel Presentation: Informational Brief

EducationCounsel, DME's pro-bono partner providing support for the cross-sector initiative, presented their preliminary findings on national research on existing structures or methods of cross-sector collaboration. They found that cooperative work largely aligns to three types:

- Ad-hoc
 - Sectors, LEAs addressing issues as they arise
 - ex) Hartford, CT: ad-hoc
- Full committees, standing working groups
 - Attempts to resolve issues before they become problematic
 - ex) Denver, CO; Spring Branch, TX
- Alternative methods
 - Cultivates opportunities to share best practices below the surface of outright cooperation
 - NYC

In addition, the following examples were cited as areas rife with opportunities for traditional public schools and public charter schools to collaborate:

- Facilities sharing:
 - Los Angeles, CA has specific policies for schools that co-locate
- Accountability/data reporting:
 - Focused on whether it was the goal of the effort to make it easier for parents to access and understand data
 - NYC provides accessible school quality reports
- Additional Specific Efforts:
 - Special Education
 - Denver Public Schools (DPS) has 132 dedicated special education centers
 - Expulsion
 - Schools in New Orleans have a centralized, standardized expulsion policy process

After the presentation, the Task Force members were asked to discuss these preliminary findings in small groups and then share feedback with the larger group. Their comments included:

- The examples provided were helpful, but what is missing is whether or not the collaboration helped student achievement.
- Likewise, more clarification is needed on each city's demographic similarities/dissimilarities with DC.

- When listening to information about varying shades of success in other cities, it is heartening to hear about, consider some of DC’s accomplishments, including the My School DC common lottery.

Proposed Guiding Principles

To vet the guiding principles, Task Force members were randomly assigned to small groups and tasked with discussing the proposed guidelines using a policy example that arose from the focus groups. Notes from the guiding principle breakout groups were captured separately and can be found in the session notes.

After returning to the full group, Task Force members shared that they felt the exercise was thought-provoking and useful, but that they either needed more time or fewer topics of discussion. Furthermore, the importance of defining terminology and metrics was posed; Task Force members wondered how they could interpret terms like “equitable” and “best interest,” stating that they would be unable to produce meaningful outcomes if language remains vague. Finally, it was noted that the guiding principles say nothing about producing better outcomes for students.

More broadly, members said that there needs to be agreement on what the core guiding principles mean and how the terms are defined, and that future outreach efforts need to both educate parents and community members on the issues while reaching a broader population before their input is actually needed.

Next Steps

As noted by DME staff, it is important to get external input on the Guiding Principles. As a closing thought, the following question was posed to the group: What is the best time to accomplish that in this process?

The next meeting of the Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force will be held from 6:00 – 8:00pm on Tuesday, April 26 in the John A. Wilson Building.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.