

## Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force Community Conversation Toolkit

### I. Introduction

In addition to the structured outreach opportunities sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), it is equally as important for community groups, religious organizations, school communities, ward-based education councils, and other members of the public to join together to discuss the work of the Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force (CSCTF).

These less formal conversations are crucial to the work of the Task Force, as they allow DME to

- Solicit input from a larger cross-section of community members on the issues being tackled by the Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force, including policy options being considered for recommendation,
- Increase public awareness of the landscape of public education in the District, including the value of cooperation between traditional public and public charter schools,
- Capture input on concerns related to current policy and practice, and
- Gather information on what the public feels is needed for effective public dialogue.

### II. Procedure

#### A. Preparation

1. We also strongly suggest enlisting the help of a colleague who can serve as a note taker; in our experience, it is often difficult for a facilitator to direct the conversation while writing down what is said. To assist in taking notes and sending them to DME, we have included a template for use during the event—this form may be used electronically or printed for hand-written notes.
2. In addition, make sure that you have a sufficient number of copies of the worksheet and consent form (attached) for your participants, as well as pens or pencils.

#### B. Background Information

1. Given that community members possess varying levels of awareness about the CSCTF, begin the conversation by establishing a foundational level of knowledge. You may want to start by asking attendees to provide a show of hands to determine who has heard of the initiative. Before engaging with the guiding principles, give participants a brief overview of the CSCTF (i.e., purpose, goals, etc.). The box

below—and all similar boxes in this document—serves as a script to guide you in sharing this information:

### **What is the purpose of the Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force?**

With approximately 55% of public school students attending DC Public School (DCPS) and 45% attending a public charter school, the next chapter of improving education in DC is for both sectors to work together.

As such, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) has been tasked by Mayor Bowser with establishing a task force charged with developing clear and fair recommendations on how to improve the coherence among and collaboration across public schools to improve effectiveness and efficiency. The Task Force will focus its efforts on recommending strategies and solutions for the priority issues that will have the most impact on improving student outcomes for all public schools in the District of Columbia.

2. After providing an overview of the CSCTF, you should also share information about how community members can learn more about the overall process and find ways to get involved. In addition to reading the boxes below, you may also refer members of the public to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) document on the [DME website](#), where it can be downloaded and/or printed.

### **How can parents, students and the public participate in the process?**

There will be multiple ways of engaging with the DME and Task Force members throughout the process; please visit the DME website to stay abreast of when these opportunities will be made available. Future opportunities will include:

- **Focus Groups**  
Opportunity to provide in-depth input into various issues and strategies being considered by the Task Force.
- **Community Meetings**  
Both small and large-scale opportunities to provide feedback on policies and strategies being considered by the Task Force meeting will be organized.
- **Online Surveys**  
Opportunity to provide feedback on-line
- **Public Roundtables**

Testify in a roundtable held by the Task Force

- **Local Education Agency (LEA) Meetings**  
Opportunity for school leaders and staff to engage and provide ongoing feedback
- **Task Force Meetings**  
Meetings of the CSCTF are open to the public; to attend, interested members of the community should check the [Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force page](#) of the DME website for details.

### C. Overview of Guiding Principles

1. To begin, explain the purpose of the guiding principles as it relates to the work of the CSCTF.

#### **What are the guiding principles? What function do they serve?**

The guiding principles were written with the purpose of grounding the work of the Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force as it moves toward Mayor Bowser’s vision of a high-quality public school in every neighborhood of the city.

The guiding principles are also intended to

- **Guide the work of the Task Force** by providing a framework through which decisions can be made,
- **Act as a “gut check”** to help the Task Force determine whether or not a policy recommendation reflects the spirit and goals of the group, and
- **Act as a tie breaker** in deciding which policies to pursue and which to omit.

To that end, the guiding principles are as follows:

- **Principle #1**  
“Raising the achievement of all students while accelerating the achievement of the lowest-performing students.”
- **Principle #2**  
“Engaging the public to obtain input and participation in policy development.”
- **Principle #3**  
“Creating a core system of high-quality public schools of right in every neighborhood complemented by high-quality public schools of choice.”

- **Principle #4**  
“Providing equitable access to high-quality schools.”
  
- **Principle #5**  
“Yielding positive outcomes for students and families through public education policies and resource planning.”

2. Use the guiding principle worksheet (attached) to help participants discuss each of the tenets.
  
3. As they complete the exercise, participants should feel free to add any items they feel are missing, or further elaborate on any that they feel are incomplete.
  
4. The note taker should try to capture which principles were non-important and important, which had strong agreement and/or disagreement, and those that participants edited.

**The DME is interested in collecting input from these community discussions. If your group is interested in and willing to do so, please share a summary of the notes taken and worksheets gathered to [collaboration@dc.gov](mailto:collaboration@dc.gov). In your email, please include the following information:**

- **Conversation date/time**
- **Conversation location**
- **Number of participants**
- **Ward of resident for each participant**
- **DCPS/PCS parental status or school/LEA affiliation of each participant**

Thank you for your assistance!

**Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force Community Conversation Worksheet**

**Meeting Date & Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ward of Residence:** \_\_\_\_\_

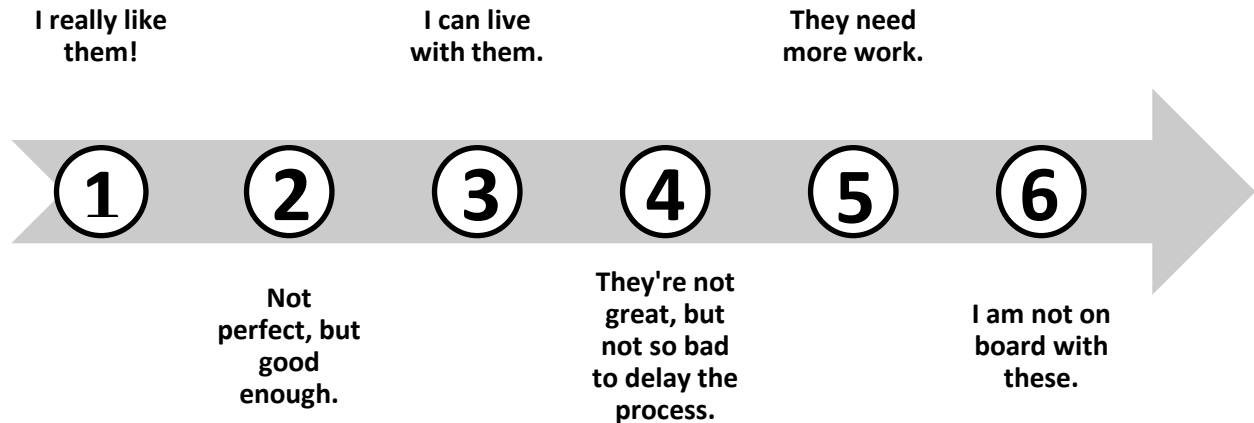
**Parent? (Check one)**  Yes  No

**If yes, which?**  DCPS  PCS

Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force Guiding Principles

- 1) "Raising the achievement of all students while accelerating the achievement of the lowest-performing students."
- 2) "Engaging the public to obtain input and participation in policy development."
- 3) "Creating a core system of high-quality public schools of right in every neighborhood complemented by high-quality public schools of choice."
- 4) "Providing equitable access to high-quality schools."
- 5) "Yielding positive outcomes for students and families through public education policies and resource planning."

**1. Using the scale below, please select the number that best represents your overall opinion of these guiding principles:**



**2. Are these the right principles to guide the work of the Task Force? Why? Why not?**

**3. Which of these guiding principles resonates with you most? Why?**

**4. In your opinion, do any of the guiding principles conflict with each other?**

**5. Are there any principles that you think are missing?**

**6. Moving forward, what are your recommendations on how DME can best engage the public in this process?**

**7. Please list any additional questions or comments below.**

## CONSENT FORM

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I have willingly participated in this community conversation to discuss the Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force (CSCTF).

- I understand that the purpose of this meeting is to share my opinions and ideas on the guiding principles of the CSCTF.
- I understand that this conversation is informal and uses a standard set of questions and, as a result, will not encompass all issues of concern.
- I understand that participating is completely voluntary and I can choose not to answer any question.
- I understand that my responses and notes regarding the session will be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), but that the information and opinions I provide will be completely anonymous. Therefore, none of my comments or responses will be linked with my name and project staff will only disclose information in their records for the limited purpose of preventing serious harm if someone is endangered.
- I understand that there is NO payment for participating in this conversation.

If you have any questions or concerns about the focus group, you may contact the project manager, Claudia Lujan, at 202-727-0696 or at [collaboration@dc.gov](mailto:collaboration@dc.gov).

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Signature

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Date

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Participant's Name (please print)

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Ward of Residence

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School/Community