

Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force
Family and Advocacy Focus Group
Capitol View Library
February 13, 2018, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Facilitators:

- Amanda Alexander | Interim Chancellor, DC Public Schools (DCPS)
- Erika Harrell | DC Prep PCS parent; Member, My School DC Parent Advisory Council; member, DC School Reform Now; member, PCSB Parent & Alumni Leadership Council (PALC)
- Ramin Taheri | Director of Cross-Sector Collaboration Initiatives, Office of the Deputy Mayor of Education (DME)

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- Richelle Russell | Policy Analyst, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Katrina Ballard | Leadership for Education Equity Public Policy Fellow, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Facilitator: The Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force grew out of the boundary process, aiming to find ways the sectors can work together and further public education that works for all students in the city. The Task Force was supposed to go for two years, and we agreed to extend it. First, we looked at enrollment stability, a recommendation approved by Mayor in 2017. This led to a mid-year entry and transfer process and a safety transfer program, both being piloted now. That's not the focus of tonight; we hosted community engagement around those recommendations last year. We then broke into two working groups to get more work done in a shorter time: At-Risk and Opening, Closing, and Siting.

Opening, Closing, and Siting Working Group, Objective 1

- I marked a pink Post-It. I have followed the Task Force discussions on this, and one thing that gave me great pause is the possibility these decisions would be made outside the public view and presented as a done deal to the public to get feedback. That's not a public process. Most Post-Its are where the public is mentioned. Public engagement is very important.
- Facilitator: Is it a matter of the public not being on this poster? What would engaging the public look like?
- I don't feel like the public has ownership in public schools.
- Facilitator: In relation to data?
- No, that the decision-making and discussion won't be public. Originally, the Task Force meetings weren't going to be public, and then someone who has since been ousted at the office decided to make them public. She felt sensitive information would be discussed. When we talk about where schools would go, that's sensitive. People want neighborhood schools. When you talk about closing one, education leaders might not want that at the forefront of discussion. I'm uncomfortable with that.

- It could just be me, but “education leaders” is a little unclear. You mentioned a parent advisory council, if those people looked at the data, are there ways to ensure greater representation? Clarifying who is in the room would be helpful.
- At the heart of public education is trust. When I look at this, it seems to me leadership is reviewing the data but also making decisions. It looks like they’re the only ones making decisions, and that’s counter to what leadership is about. Perhaps leaders review the data to figure out how to engage the community in meeting their needs. We have seen some schools close, and people in the neighborhood are outraged not about the decision but how it was made.
- There is an implication that the data is driving the decision. The set of data, whatever it is, is driving the decision-making. We live in a city of people, not a city of data, and especially in a democracy, I would hope people are driving decision-making, not data, especially for civic institutions like public education.

Opening, Closing, and Siting Working Group, Objective 2

- For me, this bullet moves more toward being inclusive and recognizes the need to engage the public along a timeline.
- I think about the purpose behind this task force, to enable more engagement, conversation, and planning between district schools and charter schools. I don’t think this was written as anti-community but for making district and charter schools talk and plan together. Here’s what the district wants and here’s what charters want, and it falls on you. It’s worth considering as that lens, remember the thing we’re trying to do is get district and charter schools to talk together. Not sure what that means about how it gets verbalized.
- For regularly engaging the public, who is defined as the public? Schools? A task force? What topics would be covered? What would this look like?
- Facilitator: The first bullet references data. Then public input is also addressed here. We can talk more about what the Task Force is thinking, but we also will take suggestions.
- I put a pink Post-It because I think it’s important to have data, but I’m really disturbed by using test score data as evidence to close schools, and that’s what’s proposed here. It’s hard for me to come to this, but I see schools as integral to community, and the whole idea you would just get rid of one because test scores aren’t at a certain level is crazy. It’s like getting rid of the post office because it’s low performing. We are not closing the library because it didn’t meet a benchmark. It’s not to make planning decisions, it’s about opening, closing, and siting schools. What does student demand mean for academic performance and other quality measures? My children attended a neighborhood school that is very good quality.
- Facilitator: I think test scores are an important factor when we consider quality. It’s not the only measure, which is why we don’t have that as the only measure.
- Sometimes demographics are a measure for quality, and people might say we don’t want to go to school with a majority of black kids. It’s not just test score data that is disagreeable, it’s determining whether a school will exist based on dataset.
- Facilitator: Right now, each sector makes decisions on things it deems relevant. This is just making it so both use the same information. The dataset could include other things.

- Is it a priority that student demographics is most important? What weight does each category have? Tell me whether is each prioritized, and what weight does it carry?
- Facilitator: We envision someone at DME would pull all information together and present to sector leadership just to see where facilities and capacities are, what the wait list data looks like for student demand, feeder patterns and enrollment decisions. We could also include access to healthcare, grocery stores, program types, and transportation. This is what we talked about in the Task Force, but it could change. Someone needs to do an analysis everyone can use.
- What about the weight?
- Facilitator: We don't give weight to any of these.
- That's what I wanted to hear.
- If you use your post office example, I think they do look at a range of data to decide where to put a full service post office, where to put PO boxes only without desk service, and where to put drop boxes. You use a bunch of data for population, demand, and there's been change in post offices. It's not all good, but we live in world of limited resources in the public sector, and people are making decisions based on data. It's not the best analogy, but having the data to look at is not objectionable. The key question is how it's used and who will be informed, which is Objective 3, but a common set of data seems like the right thing to me.
- Regarding the agreement among "education leaders," I listened to one of the Task Force conference calls where a Task Force member asked PCSB whether they'd work with other entities for placing charters, and they said no, we're not doing that.
- Facilitator: The agreement was PCSB's idea.
- How would that actually work? I didn't imagine this, it's in the minutes.
- Facilitator: First, the recommendation is to commit to move forward in a coordinated way. That would mean creating a coordinated cycle and using the same data to make decisions, then making a commitment to make sure this is all done with public input and engagement. The timeline would be understood by the public so they know when to provide input, and it's meaningful engagement.
- Facilitator: A lot of things on here seem like common sense, like to coordinate on planning or schedules, but none of that is taken into consideration now. We need formalize that process so it's enduring, so we aren't continuing to face these problems. This would include the public.
- There is nothing stopping the PCSB from coordinating with DCPS now. PCSB has said charters are independent, so no one dictates to them.
- Facilitator: That is a good point, but there's also nothing that creates a format or ground floor to begin those kinds of talks. For example, a lot of times, charters take lead from DCPS on snow days because they know families are cross-sector. There are a myriad of ways to collaborate, and we need a place to start so it can grow.
- But this is only with Opening, Closing, and Siting schools.
- Facilitator: I like the floor analogy, and I would also use the word framework. Coordinating doesn't mean DCPS dictates to charter schools or charter sector decides to close DCPS schools, but that they work together and not in a vacuum.

- This makes sense to me because education is a unifying, common goal, and we want kids who can graduate and be successful throughout life. Since charters came into being, there has been divisiveness and competition. I like common data because it communicates that the field is level. They both receive public money, and this makes sense. To me, data is not limited, and it's qualitative and quantitative. An advantage of data is it takes away what people believe, numbers don't lie.
- Who is verifying this data? Numbers can lie or be manipulated, like when a survey response rate is only 2%.
- Facilitator: Nothing is set in stone. DME would compile data, like the fact sheets each year. The information comes from OSSE and the census, which are verified and trustworthy.
- I think it sounds like a step forward to go from charters being able to cherry pick data to have one common data set. I would hope the data is public, and we are tying decisions to data to be shared publicly. Data can be manipulated, so who is creating and checking the data? That is so critical. I would encourage DME to not underestimate the number of resources needed, like the number of data scientists to bring on board. They need to invest in capacity.
- I think there should be commonality. I understand those data are things DME could pick, but there should be a "should" pick list of data elements. For example, suspension and expulsion rates, special education, those are important. The discipline issue is a big one across sectors, so it should be a strong data point.
- There's a problem when the presumption is that charters and DCPS are equal, and they're not. Legally they aren't the same. This recommendation is treating them like they're the same with that data. On that basis alone, that's highly problematic.
- That's a great point. DCPS schools have to take students that charters do not. Ward 7 has been inundated and attacked since the 90s, when the district changed all junior high schools to middle schools, which made students move up faster than they were ready for before the rest of the city. That was unsuccessful in ward 7 and hasn't been successful in the city.
- One sector isn't better than the other, they're just different.
- I know you said data isn't weighted, but how will that data determine whether a school is closed or open? That needs to be something you're looking at.
- Facilitator: This doesn't prompt one sector to influence the other. PCSB closes charters based on the Performance Management Framework, which they will continue to do as they see fit. DCPS will make its own decisions based on this information. Want to move passed schools making decisions based on different information.
- So PCSB is getting rid of its Performance Management Framework (PMF)?
- Facilitator: No, that's accountability based. This is about whether to open a new school and looking at neighborhood factors.
- I'm confused; you said PCSB will use the PMF to close schools.
- Facilitator: We want to have them look at the same information, and then put it to the public.

- Is this a suggested process or is this DCPS and charters saying they want to bring public in to consult? What is the end goal of this whole process? Is it feel-good effort to show they included the public?
- Facilitator: The goal of the Task Force is to bring the two sectors together in a way they haven't before.
- This is for DME to initiate?
- Facilitator: The Task Force includes different people from different levels of each sector. We are trying to find common ground to make some headway. We plan to bring the public input back to the Task Force, which they'll consider and then go back out in March to show the updated recommendations. At the citywide meetings, the Task Force will get more input and then try to finalize the recommendations, which then go to the Mayor this summer. Then someone has to start doing the work, for example, who sets up the meetings? It is the beginning of a longer process.
- Who started this? That wasn't answered.
- Facilitator: The Task Force started two years ago from the recommendation of the boundary process. Recommendation was to get sectors together and talk about all students together.
- It wasn't DCPS or charter schools; it was DME.
- But it was voluntary.

Opening, Closing, and Siting Working Group, Objective 3

- This poster is all green. The objective is right on point because it speaks to community engagement, can't argue with that.
- As long as there's a constant self-evaluative process, reflecting whether we actually included people from the community, with a good location and time. Need to constantly improve on that.
- How will community engagement be carried out?
- Facilitator: We had some discussions just on that. The group wants to see an understanding across both sectors of when decisions are being made to see when the community has a chance to provide input. They suggested a guide both sectors adhere to for engaging the community, not just checking a box. We don't have that ready, but it's something the task force discussed. If it's approved, we imagine a working group from both sectors would develop the guide.
- You said the charter school board will continue to close schools according to the PMF. How can there be a timeline when PCSB keeps doing what it does?
- Facilitator: The charter board already has a timeline for closing schools.
- No, it's reviews the schools, and it's done like that. How can you have an orderly progression when charters close schools whenever necessary? Will they keep the PMF?
- Facilitator: The charter board has a known approach, and DCPS does not. We need to marry them in a meaningful way as a first step. We don't know what the first iteration would look like.
- PCSB PMF doesn't take into account location, and DCPS does because they are neighborhood schools. It's not for charters, which is fine, but as a result of that

difference, the viewpoint on closures is different. You can't sit back and say to close a school because there is no leeway with neighborhood schools. The Task Force did start with a vision of a system of by-right neighborhood schools, which was articulated during the boundaries process, plus schools of choice. Vision was changed and doesn't talk about by-right neighborhood schools. If PCSB does its own process, I don't see how this can work.

- If this is part of a continuous improvement model, as this work is finalized and implemented, some of this will change for the better.
- Is this shall or would?
- I keep hearing an underlying theme of we hope they do this and we hope they do that. Would everyone be held accountable by law? They "should" and "shall" are two big differences.
- Facilitator: One thing we agreed upon early on, we are not changing the governance structure. That's not on the table. We are hopefully getting as strong a commitment as we can.

At-Risk Working Group, Objective 4

- I think it's pretty self-explanatory, that's the objective of the Task Force. We would all want to see that shared among the different sectors.

At-Risk Working Group, Objective 5

- I've seen that dog and pony show before. That's the way the system takes money, and it doesn't go to the school. Even if it comes, it comes for one year, and it takes 3-4 years to actually turn around a school. Something is missing.
- Facilitator: Related to the timeframe?
- What money are we talking about?
- How that money is used is questionable, sometimes more interventions or curriculum instead of another social worker. Needs to be more specific.
- Facilitator: Are you worried that the funding won't be targeted?
- It should address what the principal needs vs. making test scores increase. How is it implemented? Who is holding the school accountable? We need more specific information.
- We need a conversation no matter what task force we're discussing. On the ESSA task force, we are discussing equity. Does this cross a conflict at some point?
- Members of the Task Force are on the ESSA task force.
- Facilitator: To think about how this would work, if it's a recommendation, it needs to be approved, and then we think about how to implement it. Part of it ensures consistency with ESSA.
- It would help to know how it's being done now. There is a big disparity currently. Highland Elementary has a building renovation, but the old school is still there and boarded up. Kids have to walk by it, and it has been that way for years.
- Facilitator: Part of the problem is a lack of transparency for how money flows, and creating public-facing information that's accessible.

- How can you have children walking through a vacant building next to a new school built for 10 years? They blatantly say it won't be fixed, you ask and write, but you get told all kinds of stories. How are they doing things now, and how will this make a difference?
- Facilitator: I don't have an answer, but I want to think about how this could be part of the recommendations.
- Are you changing the language before March or still presenting in March with the same concerns?
- Facilitator: All of this is subject to change based on what we hear in the focus groups, but that's for the Task Force to decide based on what they heard. This is more of a summary of the more in-depth recommendations in the slides, just to capture the conversation. They are going to change before March.
- After count day, lots of charter students switch to DCPS, and as part of this, we can ensure resources are allocated as the year progresses. DCPS schools are getting new students every day. We need more accountability based on how funding is disbursed. This could help charters retain students.
- Facilitator: We have been looking for a while at how funds are distributed. If the Task Force thinks that should make it in the recommendation, that should go in there.
- We have been having this discussion for 30 years. It used to be charters across town took your kids, and when the money came in, an influx of children went back to ward 7. This is nothing new but needs to be highlighted and addressed. It's a huge thing, because people need money up front to order things.
- That is the #1 issue, financing will fix everything else. If you're not thinking about how to do real time financing, or pay quarterly... if Comcast knows how to prorate the bill, you should know too. The rest of the problems would fix themselves. After count day, charters start booting kids out. If the Cross-Sector Task Force doesn't bring that to the forefront... some schools are hurting because finance rules aren't in place. We need a recommendation to go to Councilmember Grosso so finance can track movement from one school to the next. The rest of this doesn't matter.
- We should consider assessing student needs per school, what ideas went into this?
- Facilitator: School leaders are not doing school-level needs assessments. Part of it is commissioning someone to go out and assess needs on school-by-school basis.
- When you say student needs, are we talking about family needs like food, housing - what type of resources are added to schools?
- Facilitator: You can see getting big, and a dream assessment could cover everything. Specifically we could talk about needs that could be addressed in school.
- Can I suggest adding "students and families" into the second bullet? Family engagement is what I think about all day; can we provide resources to family at the school level?
- During School Choice Week at Wilson, we spoke to Grosso and talked about ward 7 and 8 gentrifying. What part of that has been given consideration in relation to the reality? We're put into system that we're not part of. I'm not here to be confrontational, but I don't see the mention of that being the basis of the decisions being made. You can't expect me to be invested if I can't have peace from the hard work I'm doing to pay bills in the building I'm not able to live in. My city has given up that I can keep up and stay a

resident. When you say explore opportunity and find need, we're excluding the family need, and that goes hand in hand. If parents can't be parents, there are no students.

- Facilitator: I'm always about families, and if you look at these summaries and the full recommendations in packet, the language isn't exactly the same. We definitely deliberated over language like that, and for serving the At-Risk group. We need to serve the family.

At-Risk Working Group, Objective 3

- Facilitator: The Task Force felt strongly we couldn't move forward on the recommendations without attendance.
- I think attendance issues tie into demographics. The city has completely changed. A lot of my people are living in shelters, and not just in Wards 7 and 8. All of DC has become gentrified. It's an ongoing process. When you talk about attendance, you have to look at all of this. Families that can't afford to cross the city have multiple children in different places, and how do you get them there safely? If you are living in a shelter, what resources do you have? People are experiencing mental health issues.
- For attendance, people won't object that's important. Every morning is a struggle in itself, and the solution is not going around promoting attendance but understanding what's going on and addressing those needs, and attendance will follow. We should also be uniform with government, like if you are delaying school for two hours but you have to go to work, that's insane. People have to make real life decisions. If you base closings on test scores, people will record attendance inaccurately.
- Does the Task Force discuss Out of School time?
- Facilitator: We did, and the new Office of Out of School Time stated this year at DME. Significant investment. Getting at issues of understanding root causes and barriers.
- I agree wholeheartedly that everyone knows about attendance. Kids are coming out of a tough situation, then they get to school for another tough situation. They're trying to get to a safe place. A lot of these schools are not conducive to that.
- Could we make an addition about school climate?
- Yes
- At East River Family Strengthening Collaborative, we have the Show Up Stand Out program for truancy. Parents come in with 6th and 7th grade education, and the kids come home and can't help them with homework. We are trying to give the parents some education because if they can't multiply and divide, the kid gets discouraged. Children need money for the laundromat, and they don't want to go to school dirty. Kids are coming to school with soda and chips in the morning. It's about supporting the parents and family.
- I completely understand about increasing awareness, but all the awareness in the world won't change that a high school student is taking siblings to five schools without the ability to make it to first period. Being on time not a reality given their family situation. We need transportation. This is not the situation for every student, but every school and student is different. For equity, we should be considering all factors in all wards.
- There is a stigma or threat of truancy more than people realize. Some schools have tardy hall, and the referral process is a real threat. In Ward 7 the ANC has bought

washers and dryers for schools. She's right about it being a family need in the community and schools.

- I foresee it getting worse in our communities because of the rapid rehousing thing with families and shelters. Rent increases after a certain amount of time, and people can't find jobs quickly enough to afford it.
- This is about affordable housing, not homeownership. It's not sustainable.
- All part of gentrification process. In the interim, we need to try and keep families together and kids in school where it's sometimes their only hope. When my son was in Pre-K 3, we had an awful experience where he was locked in a closet. The teacher was fired. It's crazy, and he experienced a lot. He has alopecia as part of trauma. All of this is coming about because we are looking for more ways to close down schools in neighborhoods where we still have schools. What is the engagement? How do you reach out to parents? How you reach out to this group differently than others? We need to go into communities more. Really need that family engagement and support.
- Housing issue is something that should be circled and highlighted, it's a major issue in the city.
- Also, teachers are not culturally related to the community. Children feel more comfortable with teachers like them, research shows. Kids are not coming to school, or they are kicked out and go to another school. We need teacher diversity within the school to help attendance.
- Facilitator: I'm hearing everything on here is connected, and what's not on here, like housing.

At-Risk Working Group, Objective 2

- What are schools doing to beat the odds?
- We should promote early literacy and intervention, and we should give programs long enough to show an impact. For older children with reading trouble, we need a new way of teaching. We are all concerned about the early part, but don't see anything about upper grades who can't read. We need K-12 literacy programs.
- Facilitator: We know it can seem too late when students are already disengaged, and we are losing them right now in grade 1 in February. That's when we split readers and non-readers.
- What happens to those kids who can't read in first grade?
- Facilitator: We have an aggressive intervention framework, Response to Intervention, where kids are identified and tiered according to their performance level. They receive intervention service based on need. Sometimes small group, sometimes 1-1.
- What is the efficacy of that?
- Facilitator: It works.
- When do they get back on track?
- Facilitator: Not all kids get back on track, but they make progress.
- Is that the same as IEP?
- No that's for special education
- I'm in early childhood education, and promoting early intervention is backed by research and is federal law. Infants and toddlers identified with developmental delays are

entitled to interventions in a natural environment. We have research showing the percentage of children entering early intervention as infants and toddlers who move out of special education.

- Facilitator: That's what early stages is all about
- It's a strong start. I've been in the city where it turned around and came off the federal watch list. The biggest challenge is it's not the family's first experience in special education, and there is an emotional reaction. We should make sure staff are culturally competent, and most cases it can be a mistaken diagnosis.
- We have a lot of dyslexia, if they're not identified and taught the right way, all early intervention won't help if you aren't addressing how child is going to learn. Part of the issue is early intervention, I agree with the research. We all know special education staff are overwhelmed with the amount of students they're supposed to serve. You catch them, but they are not getting what they need. If you're really addressing the students' needs, you're talking about literacy.
- This connects to objective 5, ensuring extras funds that are designated for at-risk students actually gets to the students. We need to make sure funding is in place for these students.
- Facilitator: I want to reiterate it's not just about serving students with special needs, because there are many students behind in reading who are not in that category. Special education funding is for students identified as special needs.
- I was talking about both. We should identify kids in pre-k.

At Risk Working Group, Objective 1

- This is very important, and mine might be the only green one. Having pre-k 3 students in school is stressful going through the lottery. Fortunately, I moved to ward 3 for my daughter to go there. I am paying twice as much rent so she could go there. That's not a reality for all families and not easy. I worked in ward 8 school and truly believe if all students had the opportunity to get into schools that are diverse, that is key to closing the opportunity gap.
- The pushback for me is given we've been focusing on how to present the School Report Card, a lot of parents don't understand what at-risk is, and it may be a stigma. We don't want to make it confusing when it's just to capture a data point. We shouldn't include in lottery process because it's already stressful as it is.
- Facilitator: Do you mean the parent has to designate him or herself as at risk?
- There are certain factors to identify yourself.
- Facilitator: There is a stigma attached to that.
- I can see it going a way you don't want it to. If you want me to identify myself, I might not be open about my situation because in my mind it would lessen my child's chances to get in.
- How to you prevent creaming?
- This is to help the system, not the parents. It takes anonymity away from the parent. This is like affirmative action.
- I totally hear it, and I think affirmative action did some great things and gave people opportunities they may not have had. They should have had. And I wonder about this.

There are other preferences in the lottery, is there a way to affirmatively check the box? The point about how parent feels is very real. The recommendation says consider, and I want to believe there's a way to think about this. At Educare, we have 160 children from most vulnerable families, we run a Head Start program. Families don't understand the lottery, and they want all kids to get their first choice. I don't want the system to make a parent feel bad or have a label, but I want to think about something to give them an advantage because they deserve it.

- It's an equity issue when you think about at-risk, and there are other ways instead of including in the lottery. We already have so much anxiety building around the process, and we don't want to add more.
- I support what I believe is a good intent behind this. I worry this becomes a more convenient way to address equity without getting at bigger issues like financing. This is one tool, but what else is done?
- Facilitator: You may notice objectives 1 and 2 almost contradict each other, because it's about doing everything. No one assumes any one of these will solve the problems alone.
- When you say at risk what do you mean?
- Facilitator: It's the definition from the UPSFF formula. Students who are homeless, in foster care, receive SNAP, or receive special education. Objective 5 is talking about other ways to identify at risk, like immigrant families who aren't eligible or able to come forward.
- Facilitator: Or grandparents or relatives.
- To the first point on objective 1, an at-risk lottery preference would be exercised only at schools with less than 25% at risk students. Intent to diversify and break up concentrated poverty, which is correlated with lower achievement. But there is a problem because there is a presumption that those schools can adequately educate at risk students. That assumption was never questioned. I used a pink Post-It for that reason because that is a huge presumption. For Objective 2 find and expand programs working for students, we should do this.
- Facilitator: The Task Force won't decide specifics in recommendations.
- Housing and transportation are a big part to #1. Cultural competency needs to be discussed if we are trying to redistribute at-risk students in schools.
- Absolutely right about cultural competency. Can you write more what at-risk means?
- Facilitator: The group at beginning decided to use at-risk designation. Those are the things that go into the law, but we knew that didn't include everyone who was at-risk. We decided to try starting with this, but that's not everyone.
- There are also a lot of children who have trauma. That's blocking their education.
- I want to support considering a lottery preference for pre-k coming from CBOs. It's a real experience for families who feel like they're being intimidated to pull children out of program they've been with since infancy because told they won't get into charter or DCPS school for Kindergarten.
- That's the reason I'm here too, it's creating a false choice for parents. We need some relationship or preference so entry could be where parents want to be.
- Can I get clarification on last point for objective 1?

- Facilitator: Magnet schools were discussed by DCPS Task Force members as other ways to diversify schools other than lottery preferences.
- We would create another school but not fix the one already under-resourced?
- Facilitator: Not necessarily.
- When you say diversity what do you mean?
- This diversity is focused on socio-economic diversity.
- Federal law defines magnets as specialized programming designed to reduce racial isolation, designed to put a special program to draw diverse student body for either sector.
- There is a federal program that funds magnet schools, and the Magnet Schools of America association.
- DC does not have any magnet schools.
- What I appreciate the most about the first one is the word consider. I understand a potential stigma to identify as at-risk, and there is a dissonance between families from other wards. But I am thinking of what we have to lose without even trying this option. Other than fixing the school that exist, what are other ideas?
- Transportation. Public transit is hard, can take an hour. I wish DC had school buses. Parents don't feel comfortable sending kids across town. I get that. I went to neighborhood school that was diverse but represented the community. DC is so segregated, I think about those issues to get there. Everybody wants that. Transportation and housing are two major things.
- For pretty much everything, you need to get public buy-in. If we don't have public buy-in, going back in time to get children to this part of town and what will they be subjected to.
- If My School DC had a checkbox for receiving TANF, etc. would families want to get a preference?
- They already do on a variety of forms.
- Sibling preference is a golden ticket. What about volunteering the at-risk information, would parents want that?
- They need to understand what it's for.
- Families want the best for their children; checking a box isn't a big deal.
- That's where education navigators could come into play.
- Great Schools navigates through the lottery, and for pre-k programs, it's associated with 98% success rate; families got their first choice.
- I am telling you up front even though you think it sounds good, is it good? We need to find other ways for these kids to get in without identifying them like that.
- Or we need to get buy-in from the community. If community isn't for this, it's been segregated for years, and we shouldn't need affirmative action to get better services. We accept these things as normal. We should have the same opportunities in our communities that you have in a school across town. We need to not make it normal. I think we've normalized it for too long, and it shouldn't be affirmative action.
- Facilitator: You are absolutely right, that should not have to be it. But without affirmative, anyone here without a degree might not have that.

- We are normalizing that. We should not have to keep asking for rights that other people have.
- This is not going to work, taking children across town where parents don't want them there, they're going to become victims.
- Resources are constrained, and there have been multiple attempts to address these issues at once. But are we creating box or doing truly whatever it takes?