

Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force  
Tuesday, November 28, 2017  
Education Counsel, 101 Constitution Ave. NW, Suite 900  
Meeting #19

**Attendees:**

- Amanda Alexander | Deputy Chief of Elementary Schools, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Kemba Hendrix | Elsie Whitlow Stokes PCS parent; former public and public charter school teacher
- Emily Lawson | Founder & CEO, DC Prep PCS
- Jim Sandman | President, Legal Services Corporation; former General Counsel, DCPS; former Managing Partner, Arnold & Porter
- Mayor Anthony Williams | CEO & Executive Director, Federal City Council; former Mayor
- Irene Holtzman | Executive Director, Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS)
- Hanseul Kang | State Superintendent of Education
- Melissa Kim | Chief Academic Officer, Secondary Schools, KIPP DC; former principal, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Mary Levy | Independent education analyst, Former DC Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Former Washington Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
- Bethany Little | Murch ES, BASIS PCS parent; Education policy expert
- Claudia Luján | Deputy Chief, Strategic School Planning, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Jennifer Niles | Deputy Mayor for Education
- Scott Pearson | Executive Director, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)
- Antwan Wilson | Chancellor, District of Columbia Public Schools
- Shantelle Wright | Founder & CEO, Achievement Prep PCS; Chair, DC Association of Public Charter Schools
- 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)
- Carlie Fisherow | Executive Director, DC Scholars Community Schools

**Co-Chairs:**

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

**Members not in attendance:**

- Evelyn Boyd Simmons | Francis-Stevens parent; W2 Education Network; former member, Student Assignment Committee; President, Logan Circle Community Association; Chief of External Relations & Partnerships, Africare
- Angela Copeland | Stuart-Hobson MS parent; public affairs specialist
- Charlene Drew-Jarvis | Graduate, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS); Senior Advisor, KIPP DC PCS; former Ward 4 City Councilwoman
- Ariana Quinones | Duke Ellington HS, Next Step PCS parent; education and human services policy consultant, Otero Strategies Group; former member, Student Assignment Committee
- Karen Williams | Ward 7 Representative, State Board of Education (SBOE)
- Shanita Burney | Deputy Chief, Community Engagement, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Caryn Ernst | Watkins ES, Stuart-Hobson MS parent; former PTA president, Capitol Hill Cluster School; member, Capitol Hill Public School Parent Organization (CHPSPO)
- Faith Gibson Hubbard | Chief Student Advocate, State Board of Education (SBOE); former member, Student Assignment Committee
- Alejandra Vallejo | Bancroft ES parent; Chair, Bancroft ES Local School Advisory Team (LSAT)
- Darren Woodruff | EL Haynes PCS, Benjamin Banneker HS parent ; Chair, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)

### **Staff:**

- Jennifer Comey | Director of Planning, Data, and Analysis, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Ramin Taheri | Director of Cross-Sector Collaboration Initiatives, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Alex Cross | Special Advisor for Education Facilities Planning, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Rebecca Lee | Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Richelle Russell | Data 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)
- Briana Urbina | Leadership for Education Equity Public Policy Fellow, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)

### **Meeting Summary:**

*The meeting began at 6:07 pm.*

- Facilitator Ramin Taheri reviewed the agenda and goals for the meeting.
  - Discussed a memo sent to the group by some task force members.
  - Noted that Deputy Mayor Niles responded and shared some thoughts, agreed it's essential to identify common ground. One of the first things the taskforce did was

try to establish common ground. There are a lot of issues not in the center of the Venn Diagram, which can be frustrating, but the Task Force has been making a lot of progress, and we don't want to lose momentum.

- Facilitator reviewed this month's spotlight, which featured the first two recommendations coming out of the Task Force, Safety Transfers and Mid-Year Mobility.
- Facilitator reviewed Community Engagement Process
  - Aiming to spend February and March engaging the community, but we need to get into final stage with recommendations.
- Task Force Member: For the targeted focus groups, will there be times we can collectively identify those groups?
  - Facilitator: We can have a call to discuss that. Everyone will have a chance to plan the community engagement process.
- Facilitator went over the recap of last meeting.

*The Task Force broke into working groups for 20 minutes.*

- Facilitator: We're going to review what the At-Risk group came up with for draft recommendations. We chose four broad areas (see At-Risk slides).
  - Taskforce has adopted the format of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg report, including high level strategy and specific recommendations.
  - Group members will come up to present five high-level objectives (At-Risk slides).
- A Task Force member presented recommendations on Objective 1 (At-Risk slide 5)
- Task Force Member: These are exciting. Is this the taskforce output, and then left to city to take it to the next step?
- Facilitator: The role of the Task Force is making recommendations and thinking about who is responsible to make sure these work as part of our next steps.
- Task Force Member: 1.3 stands out as different from the rest. For 1.2, we've done some dabbling around parent information systems. Have you guys thought about what has or hasn't worked? Interesting bang for its buck compared to 1.3; those two recommendations don't seem to belong in the same place.
- Facilitator: My School DC doesn't provide counseling. There are places we have as a city dabbled, and that's what we need to have in a report, such as learning from past attempts. We all felt for choice to really work, it depends on everyone having access to information and using it.
- Task Force Member: 1.2.3 seems very different from general information about mental health supports in the city and in schools. It seems very different than the other 1.2 considerations.
- Task Force Member: Adding to that, with 1.2.1 and 1.2.3, there are agencies who are able to support families with their resources based on how much money they have, but there's

no sharing of information. We should put with Objective 1 we need to understand advantages families have already and fill the gaps for those that don't.

- Task Force Member: A big takeaway for Objective 1 is that if we're trying to better support schools with high concentrations of poverty, most of these recommendations are centered around moving students. That puts a lot on the student moving, but what about supporting the schools with particularly high concentrations of need? It's concerning for me if the solution is just about moving students.
- Task Force Member: When I read the word address, I assumed it meant minimize concentrated poverty in schools. Obviously it could also mean give more resources, but those are in the other recommendations. Maybe just change the word address to "reduce" and make it about reducing the concentrations.
- Facilitator: We discussed the issue of the same students and families always bearing the burden, and the recommendations as a whole are designed to avoid just that. Objective 1 is just about trying to solve for issues facing at-risk students. The rest of the recommendations are identifying what's working well and replicating those practices, and address funding gaps. No one assumed there was a magic bullet to diversify schools, but we think it's part of a suite of proposals.
- Task Force Member: We might not lead with this one, and the word "address" is a challenge. Regarding 1.2.2, accountability information, is that a proxy for quality information? Accountability isn't a parent-level undertaking.
- Facilitator: That recommendation may fall away, as OSSE develops the report cards. Not sure we need a specific recommendation on this. The goal was to make sure students and families could understand this information.
- Task Force Member: 1.3.1 implies the benchmark is about at-risk and low-income students, because we value a mix of students in all schools, so we would benchmark for diversity in all schools. I like that you did 1.3.5 because transportation underlies all of these other considerations.
  
- A Task Force member presented recommendations on Objective 2 (At-Risk slide 6)
- Task Force Member: We are always trying something that seemed to work on a small scale. First of all, too often best practices are not subjected to careful scrutiny. When it's scaled up, one of two things happen – it doesn't fit in many places, or it gets deluded because it takes resources, then it's declared a failure. However, the Grad Pathways study was vetted by statisticians, and they really were beating the odds. It's a good model for this kind of thing.
- Task Force Member: There's information from the DC Early Childhood investments that the gap has widened, so when we're talking about at-risk students specifically, let's not think about just early childhood but more 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Special education identification happens in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and we should add that perspective on 2.3.

- Facilitator: Some considerations would be scalability and subjecting things to statistical rigor, so would need to include that.
  - Task Force Member: It's exciting that from a political perspective, this is a shared objective. That struck me as the real potential excitement. Could we create a process for jointly identified priorities? The sectors could go to council together, for example in the budgeting process, and say we prioritize these things. If you want more money to flow to these programs, that's the dynamic that changes the money flowing.
  - Task Force Member: Some of these we could just do, while others would go to our colleagues. For example, there are available meeting rooms in school libraries for places for students to come for credit recovery, and it doesn't matter what school you're from but someone is always staffing it.
  - Facilitator: Something like that could grow from one of these recommendations.
  - Task Force Member: Maybe we need to do more research. Even if gaps are closed in early literacy, they are not closed later on. Should we add that – reading intervention research?
  - Task Force Member For 2.3.1, the engage parents and families piece is powerful. It doesn't address issues for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, which requires parent buy in early. I think that part is important.
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- A Task Force member presented recommendations for Objective 3 (At-Risk slide 7)
  - Task Force Member: It sounds to me social-emotional learning could be very important. We should be more explicit about that.
  - Facilitator: That fits well with DCPS' strategic plan.
  - Task Force Member: Do you mean students attend schools where they feel loved and cared for?
  - Task Force Member: Yes and whether you're paying attention to why kids aren't in school.
  - Task Force Member: 3.1.1 sounds like the current attendance effort.
  - Facilitator: We heard from our office about EDC! There were questions as to whether that extended to school-level practitioners and what could we do as a recommendation? The group felt attendance is essential but also questioned whether this is redundant.
  - Task Force Member: Working with parents on school options is important, but some schools are struggling because they have larger numbers of kids that come to school less frequently. What is the analysis to understand why that is? How much is transportation, housing, families' access to jobs, or lack of understanding on the importance of being in school? We need to understand that. What resources are available for this? Schools are being judged based on low performance of the school, compared with other schools that have high attendance, parents are shopping for schools, and kids are on grade level. For us, it's worth trying to figure out the causes and supports.
  - Facilitator: Agreed- how can we use the Task Force to add to what EDC is already doing?

- Task Force Member: This is more important than anything else I've heard so far. If we aren't going to figure this out, it's going to kill the other stuff for certain schools.
- Task Force Member: It's foundational.
- Task Force Member: I echo that, and also want to bring ECE in. When we have 3-year-olds attending school that's not compulsory, that starts the pattern. We should involve parents to create the solution. How parents experience school happens in the pre-k year, and we treat it differently, but then they have to change those patterns. We should focus on ECE attendance.
- A Task Force member presented recommendations for Objective 4 (At-Risk slide 8)
- Task Force Member: Is this also about data sharing with other agencies within the city?
- Facilitator: This grew mostly out of Raise DC's work. It's not just getting the data but having schools understand what to do with it and use it well. There's much more we could add to this.
- Task Force Member: Does this capture the concept of cumulative files? Why doesn't data live with OSSE? We need one data platform with the student identification number used to access student records, rather than calling school multiple times to get a paper record. Does this capture creating a better data system for kids?
- Task Force Member: The Bridge to HS Data Exchange is an opt-in process for middle and high schools as students move from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. For all schools, OSSE was able to standardize some data points, like PARCC information. Schools that opt in provide additional information not provided to OSSE, like grades and credits. This year, the high schools are providing information back to middle schools about how kids were doing in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Could we have similar opt-in opportunities for other grade levels?
- Task Force Member: I want to second the idea, and a bunch of people looking at the issue of wrapping data from multiple agencies. We could create a full data portfolio for each child to personalize instruction to their needs.
- Task Force Member: In the beginning, we also said this impacts the most transient students, and movement is where we need information.
- Task Force Member: 4.2.1 is about technical assistance, but maybe we need different technical assistance for sending data vs. using data. For example, ANET does training for benchmark data. That's really different, but who is the right group to help schools use this data to maximize their effectiveness? Seems like a role for a non-profit.
- Staff: I sat in on a session for Bridge to Data Exchange, and a nonprofit was explaining how this is done in different cities. They are already involved in the District and use qualitative data as well, such as meeting over the summer to recommend putting a student with athletics. There are scalability and other challenges, but it's more than just attendance, behavior, and grades.
- Facilitator: The EML program has worked on exchanging information with personal relationships between schools.

- Task Force Member: We were thinking about the secondary level but focusing on key transition points. There is lots of movement across sectors in grades 4-6.
- Task Force Member: This can also alleviate pressure from families because some schools can un-enroll the student if the family doesn't bring a report card. Schools can just share it with one another, and kids will be in a better position to exercise choice.
- A Task Force Member presented recommendations for Objective 5 (At-Risk slide 9).
- Task Force Member: We should be looking at costs related to bright spots of beating the odds - what's the cost structure of those schools?
- Task Force Member: In the adequacy study, that's what they did, specifically on at-risk kids. There's a foundation there, with specific at-risk recommendations. Maybe we need to update them and get additional input.
- Task Force Member: For 5.1.2, didn't Council vote not to put time limits on TANF?
- Task Force Member: They extended it, but there is another end point.
- Task Force Member: My understanding is at-risk is defined using TANF or SNAP, but SNAP is a lower bar, so if the family ran out on TANF, wouldn't food stamps continue to flag them?
- Task Force Member: WIC is new to me. Though WIC is another government benefits program, families were more willing to participate in WIC. It's age limited.
- Task Force Member: Typically immigrant families access WIC more frequently.
- Task Force Member: For assessing schools' funding needs - we need an understanding of what resources work, and what they would cost?
- Task Force Member: We've just said that, so we should add that, but then ask about what gaps still exist.
- Task Force Member: We've always had trouble with way we define at-risk. For Special Education, once you're identified, you're identified for life. The definition doesn't quite address kids with achievement difficulties. It addresses poverty and transition difficulties, but what about academic gaps?
- Facilitator: We decided to go with the funding definition of at-risk, but it doesn't capture those issues.
- Staff: The definition just gets at poverty.
- Task Force Member: I have some social science research discomfort. Identifying schools that are beating the odds doesn't draw the line between the program and outcome. The leader might not be able to point to one specific thing. That's a limitation on figuring out how folks are resourced. I don't know how to solve it, but we should just acknowledge it.
- Task Force Member: That's a fair point, but the asking the question will clarify what's working and what's not. We have to start somewhere. For 5.1.2, you are only eligible for WIC if you have children under 5.

- Task Force Member: WIC would not be a replacement but just another pathway for identification, so we can get at immigrant families.
- Task Force Member: We also need get to students who haven't already gone through in-school identification program.
- Task Force Member: We should add some language that it's not an alternative.
- Task Force Member: Of SNAP, TANF, WIC – are any available to undocumented families?
- Task Force Member: All are available, it's about the social level of comfort.
- Staff: An immigrant child can get food stamps, but not an adult.
- Task Force Member: So there is some combination of cultural and legal barriers.
- Staff: With the looming threat of a time restriction, the District has been lenient.
  
- Facilitator: Is there any overall feedback?
- Task Force Member: This is really great work! It shows how exhaustive you've all been. Special education isn't in this document, however. What is another avenue to talk about kids that are multiple grade levels behind and stay that way?
- Task Force Member: Do we have data point of what percentage of at-risk students are also in special education?
- Task Force Member: Citywide 17% of students have special needs.
- Staff: Almost half of our kids are at-risk.
- Task Force Member: But is special education evenly distributed across schools? It's likely correlated with at-risk and low performing.
- Task Force Member: There's a difference in distribution across DCPS and charters. Comparing at-risk students at all charters, the data looks like bell curve: the bulk of schools are serving 40-45%, while some are serving a large number and some a small number. DCPS looks like a U – some schools are serving a very high percentage and some very low. They are mirror images.
- Next steps
  - Schedule a call on the community engagement plan in December
  - Next meeting on January 30, 2018 at Education Counsel.

*The meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.*