

## CSCTF Meeting #2 Guiding Principles Worksheet

Group 1, Facilitator: Margie Yeager, Participants: Bethany Little, Caryn Ernst, Kaya Henderson, Kemba Hendrix, Lars Beck

### **Gut reactions. What is missing?**

- Strengthening and improving both sectors, not picking winners or losers, looking for win-wins.
- Guiding principles ignore housing, employment, and wealth gap. We must recognize and note the interdependencies that impact.
- Hard to know real trade-offs until economic hard times hit and have to make cuts.
- How do we encourage sharing of best practices across sectors? Should be a principle. How to pair schools for deeper collaboration?
- Need to add innovation or pushing to do things differently, pursuit of new approaches
  - Innovation for quality, but not an end to itself

#### Transparency:

- Transparency should be a different policy.
- Need to focus on transparency and accountability across all schools.
- Overemphasis on transparency, concern when paired with accountability means school closures. DCPS has more concentrations of at-risk kids. No one has data that shows school closures help. Need principle around social good of schools, community good. Closing schools radically destabilizes communities.
- Need consistency in data across sectors for transparency.
- Increasing transparency because people lack knowledge

### **Policy examples:**

To be used just as examples and for discussion purposes only.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grade configuration alignment</li><li>• Lottery preference (e.g. at-risk, neighborhood)</li><li>• Citywide expulsion policy</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Charter school-of-right</li><li>• Citywide year round enrollment</li><li>• Other example?</li></ul> |
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GUIDING PRINCIPLE	<b>Questions for Discussion</b> <i>What are some concrete tradeoffs? Are there any tensions between/within principles?  Outstanding questions we need to discuss.</i>
<b>1.</b> <b>Equitable outcomes for all students with a focus on our lowest performing students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about closing achievement gap and need to talk about accelerating the lowest, but also engaging and raising higher performers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ...accelerating the lowest and disadvantaged</li> <li>○ ...and schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Question of focus on lowest performing students does not resonate with all parents. Need to raise the ceiling and the floor</li> <li>• Ameliorate, not exacerbate existing divisions between race and class</li> <li>• Don't use language of equitable outcomes – vague. All children achieve and grow at high levels</li> <li>• Should use emphasis, not focus</li> <li>• Equitable may not mean the right investment</li> <li>• Environment was set up to be competitive. Can we get to equity?</li> <li>• Need to say want better educational outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>2.</b> <b>Authentic public input and participation in policy development</b>	

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<b>3.</b> <b>A core system of public schools of right in every neighborhood complemented by a public school system of choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choice, but maybe should not have competition</li></ul>
<b>4.</b> <b>Equitable access to high quality schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our (Task Force) job is not to define quality because people value different things.</li><li>• The quality of our schools must improve. We must do better for kids.</li><li>• 20 years of competition – are we happy with school quality? What do we need to do differently, besides throwing money at the problem?</li><li>• Parents only care about quality and are sector agnostic.</li></ul>
<b>5.</b> <b>Public education policies and planning that reflect the best interest of students and families.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the best interest of students and families? Who gets to define? Paternalistic.</li></ul>

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<p><b>6.</b> <b>Effective investment of resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are resources that we are thinking? Need to look at equitable access of resources with the amount of external (PTA) resources</li><li>• “Effective” is vague word. Should be equitable investment</li><li>• Inability to get data on charter finances is what she means by transparency. Need to report test scores the same way – why is that?</li><li>• Also need data on real cost at charters because of external philanthropic investments.</li></ul>
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<b>Gut reactions. What is missing?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They seem right, but Task Force hasn't gotten enough feedback from community.</li> </ul>	
<b>Policy examples:</b> To be used just as examples and for discussion purposes only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade configuration alignment</li> <li>• Lottery preference (e.g. at-risk, neighborhood)</li> <li>• Citywide expulsion policy</li> <li>• Charter school-of-right</li> <li>• Citywide year round enrollment</li> <li>• Other example?</li> </ul>
<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</b>	<b>Questions for Discussion</b> <i>What are some concrete tradeoffs? Are there any tensions between/within principles?</i> <i>Outstanding questions we need to discuss.</i>
<b>1.</b> <b>Equitable outcomes for all students with a focus on our lowest performing students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difference between equal vs. equality</li> <li>• Equitable outcomes vs. equitable incomes             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are "outcomes"?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• "Accelerating the growth of our lowest performers"             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wordsmith to not alienate high performers</li> <li>○ What does this say to our families with high performers? Do we not have a message?</li> <li>○ Closing achievement gap → accelerate lowest fastest</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All students <u>or</u> lowest performers – which one?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lowest performing students = SpEd students</li> <li>○ Diversity conversation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>2.</b> <b>Authentic public input and participation in policy development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need input to reflect best interests</li><li>• #2 and #5 go hand in hand</li></ul>
<b>3.</b> <b>A core system of public schools of right in every neighborhood complemented by a public school system of choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One participant edited title at left to read “3. A core system of public schools of right in every neighborhood complemented by a public school system of public school choice”</li></ul>
<b>4.</b> <b>Equitable access to high quality schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is diversity embedded in this principle?</li><li>• Ease of access</li><li>• Diverse schools are best<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Class/SES/racial/SpEd diversity</li><li>○ Schools that are overburdened struggle to get out of the “hole”</li></ul></li></ul>

<p><b>5.</b></p> <p><b>Public education policies and planning that reflect the best interest of students and families.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do we ensure that we are hearing from parents that truly represent?</li><li>• Also, ease of access to information for parents</li></ul>
<p><b>6.</b></p> <p><b>Effective investment of resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does “effective” mean?</li><li>• Investment = money<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Is this what we mean? Different word choice?</li><li>○ If we invest X in this school, then what happened? Did we get the outcome we expected?</li></ul></li></ul>

## Gut reactions. What is missing?

- The group agreed that the language for the guiding principles is “way too loose”. The group was confused by most of them.
- The group also wants to know who these principles are for – schools or parents/students? Parents/students say they want uniform grade configuration but this doesn’t benefit all schools. Who is the prioritization and focus for the principles?
- One of the members also wanted to know if the CSTF’s recommendations would have more of a policy or practice lens? From this member’s perspective the task force should focus on creating policies to create better teachers/schools leaders so that parents can get into quality seats.

### **Policy examples:**

To be used just as examples and for discussion purposes only.

- Grade configuration alignment
- Lottery preference (e.g. at-risk, neighborhood)
- Citywide expulsion policy
- Charter school-of-right
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- Other example?

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

### **Questions for Discussion**

*What are some concrete tradeoffs? Are there any tensions between/within principles?  
 Outstanding questions we need to discuss.*

### **1. Equitable outcomes for all students with a focus on our lowest performing students**

- The group didn’t understand what “equitable outcomes” means. They also wanted to understand how equitable outcomes compares to equitable access. They wanted to know if this is intended for students or for schools.
- They want to recognize – and have the group recognize – that some of the goals are in conflict with one another. In particular, the goal focusing on #1 and #5. Some policies that support low performing students wouldn’t directly benefit all students. Also some wards may benefit with some policies over other wards. So the cross sector task force should name the tension and determine whether they are going to recommend policies that benefit all students or focus specifically on low performing students. But the group can’t do both.
- This small group thought the task force should prioritize serving high risk students over all students.
- One member talked about how this tension between serving all students and lowest performing students



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Group 3, Facilitator: Jenn Comey

Participants: Melissa Kim, Anjali Kulkarni, Hanseul Kang

	occurs in the charter community as well. Some schools support mostly low performing students while others say they support a more diverse population (which is another way of saying high income families).
<b>2. Authentic public input and participation in policy development</b>	
<b>3. A core system of public schools of right in every neighborhood complemented by a public school system of choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The group agreed that every charter should serve as a system as right, as well as DCPS. But this would only work if all schools were willing to be closed (charter and DCPS), so that schools could get right sized across the board. We have too many small schools in the District, which hurts economy of scale. Too many small schools requires high principal human capital and all the supports that kids and families want. We can't run good schools with such small enrollments. Plus, all the schools are fighting for students and efficiency. We need a project management plan for the schools in the city.</li></ul>
<b>4. Equitable access to high quality schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The group discussed that this principle assumes that there could be equitable access to high quality schools. For instance, it may seem that MySchool creates equitable access but is it equitable when students can't get seats that they want? The crux of the issue is that we need to improve the quality of all schools.</li><li>• Some members discussed their frustration with not having a common school report card across the sectors</li></ul>

<p><b>5.</b>  <b>Public education policies and planning that reflect the best interest of students and families.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some members took issue with the language “best interests” in #5. They worried about being paternalist about interest of students and families.</li> <li>• From one member’s perspective everyone should be focusing on improving teachers and schools leaders – that is focus the group should have to address the “best interests.”</li> <li>• The group discussed how the majority of parents do not know the difference between the sectors. In an ideal world parents and students wouldn’t know the difference between sectors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.</b>  <b>Effective investment of resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One member discussed how “effective investment of resources” means nothing when it isn’t tied to outcomes. But the first challenge is that we don’t have good information about inputs. For instance, we don’t know how schools use their UPSFF – there is no clear reporting. What are school’s expenses? Where did they put their money? The issue of transparency with finances is huge. For instance, we have no idea if SPED level 1-4 funding is it enough or not? It’s very hard to focus on this guiding principle until we know the ground-level information.</li> <li>• Another member agreed but said that operationalizing a common chart of accounts would be very hard/large burden and very hard to make uniform over so many different LEAs. The group discussed this and decided that a common chart of accounts wouldn’t have to be overly detailed – it could be broad and still provide critical information.</li> <li>• Another member said that this principle is very important because schools have relatively well resourced, especially compared to other states. District public schools have the relative luxury of small class sizes and staff/student ratios, as well as supports and services. (Compare our funding levels to CA for instance!) And yet we still have many low performing students/schools. The needs of our students are deep – we cannot discount that – but it’s critical that as a city we understand what choices our schools are making with their resources, and which seem to be working and which don’t.</li> <li>• The group agreed that before we could figure out “effective” if we even had basic information about spend plans.</li> </ul>

**Gut reactions. What is missing?**

- Are these guiding principles are for the city and how the city should operate or for the cross sector group only?

**Policy examples:**

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- Grade configuration alignment
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**GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

**Questions for Discussion**

*What are some concrete tradeoffs? Are there any tensions? Questions we need to address or discuss in order to better navigate tensions and understand implications.*

**1.  
Equitable outcomes  
for all students with a  
focus on our lowest  
performing students**

- Requests for clarity on what we mean by **equitable outcomes** for all students. We don't know what equitable outcomes means. Are we saying we want to homogenize the results? Equitable outcomes didn't work for everyone. It's a matter of how we phrase it. Change it to graduating students college and career ready. Want a more successful outcome, specific.
- It's confusing in connection with/to high quality and in reference to other guiding principals
- Translates to educators that the focus needs to be on the lower performers and the higher performing students are neglected. Need to focus on how students are learning and strengthen how they are learning.
- Where are we going with the equitable outcomes? Is this about what happens in the classroom? Sounds like a different priority between high and low performing students
- Suggestions for re phrasing: All students regardless of background, race, ethnicity – no group didn't like that designation
- It's not the outcomes we want equity on, we want all students to achieve the highest they can for them, not equitable outcomes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Just all students, irrespective of academic challenge, need to adjust the language regardless of the issue, that all students needs are taken into account</li><li>• Group recommendation : <b>All students graduate from high school ” college or career ready” (reference the PARCC designation so that the younger grades are not excluded)</b> —If we look at graduate do we miss some of the lower grades and our expectations for them?</li></ul>
<b>2. Authentic public input and participation in policy development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does authentic engagement mean?</li><li>• What are concrete ways we would measure this? Like the principle but how would we know if we really did this and did it well?</li><li>• Define public and include teachers as a part of the input process</li><li>• What are we doing to ensure that parents are informed and supported?</li><li>• This would be a huge undertaking and it would become the entire work of the taskforce and we are not structured to do this well</li><li>• Barriers to this:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— How do we get parents to participate</li><li>— Parents feel too intimidated to engage</li><li>— Parents may feel or be underqualified</li><li>— Standards have changed since they were in school</li></ul></li><li>• Parents need to feel part of the process from the very beginning and necessary- that is how you get the authenticity</li><li>• Group recommendation: <b>Engaging the public to obtain input and participation in policy development.</b></li></ul>

<p><b>3.</b> <b>A core system of public schools of right in every neighborhood complemented by a public school system of choice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks for clarification on what “of right” means</li> <li>• Reason that choice is important, but the question is now the only way you get to quality is by traveling.</li> <li>• Do we want to combine with #4? What that clarifies is what we don’t mean, you get the equity of access by making it equally difficult to get in – we don’t want that.</li> <li>• Do we want a different principle – we don’t think you should have to travel to get a high quality education. You should have access in your neighborhood to a high quality school.</li> <li>• Choice has been a safety valve, who wants to travel across the city to meet your needs? Some families are fine traveling for quality.</li> <li>• Group Recommendation: <b>A core system of high quality public school of right in every neighborhood complemented by a public school system of choice.</b></li> <li>• Total tension between principles 5, 6 and 3.</li> <li>• Have to define effective, everyone has an idea of what this is but if we don’t pull out the specific elements, define them and align on them we won’t be able to address these questions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b> <b>Equitable access to high quality schools</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to combine with #3.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5.</b> <b>Public education policies and planning that reflect the best interest of students and families.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #5 and #6 are just so obvious and necessary - should they be removed?</li> <li>• Discussion of examples of how this is necessary in the city</li> </ul>

CSCTF Meeting #2 Guiding Principles Worksheet

Group 4, Facilitator: Naomi Watson

Participants: Evelyn Boyd Simmons, Alejandra Vallejo, Karen Williams, Charlene Drew-Jarvis, Erika Harrell (phone), Emily Lawson (phone)

<b>6. Effective investment of resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• #5 and #6 are just so obvious and necessary - should they be removed?</li><li>• Discussion of examples of how this is necessary in the city</li></ul>
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