CSCTF Meeting 4 Breakout Group Notes

Group 1
Facilitator: Margie Yeager
Note Taker: Erin Garratt
Participants: Shanita Burney, Faith Gibson Hubbard, Irene Holtzman, Emily Lawson, Darren Woodruff

- **Reflections from presentation**

  o Is the goal to reduce numbers of mobile students? Is it to more equally spread the mobility? For charters, it is a matter of funding, because taking students after October means taking a potentially high-risk student who needs more resources.

  o From a fairness perspective, replacing students who leave is the right thing to do. If a charter is being paid year round for a student, then it makes sense to "true up" the money by taking another child in his/her place.

  o Is it necessarily fair to say that? There is not a sense of parity between the sectors. DCPS principals have a lot of leeway in taking mid-year transfers from OOB.

  o Attendance is a huge issue for not being invited back for OOB students.

  o DCPS being funded on projections, rather than reality still does not balance the conversation. The difference in amount that is being paid to DCPS over PCS is not equal to the number of students taken.

  o If schools take students, they should be funded to do so.

  o This is also a question of how choice is implemented. Mobility is not always negative and that is not captured in the existing structure. Not all schools are schools of right. How much mobility is acceptable in a system that allows parents to make choices on what is best for their child? Programmatic match is a real thing.

  o DCPS does not have a choice to take highly mobile students, who are frequently at high risk, low-income, etc. and are entering schools that do not have the resources to accept them. There needs to be more conversation about resources following students.

  o Rather than considering sector to sector, discussion of money following students should incentivize schools to retain children.

  o If very mobile students are most vulnerable, how can LEA, school leaders be strategic about matching students to programs that best support them?

  o There has been a lot of discussion about students going from school to school, sector to sector, but what about students leaving altogether?

- o   On that note, students leaving DC to attend school out of state also includes students who are not residents at all.

- o   Outside of residency fraud, there are displaced students (i.e., homelessness, etc.)

- o   What about dropouts?

- o   Is there overlap with the Reengagement Center to see who is dropping out?

- o   There are not enough schools providing quality options for parents and families.

- o   Schools that are high-quality also means serving at-risk students.

- o   Does the concept of choice involve a certain amount of mobility built in?

- o   Does choice enable the making of irrational or short-sighted decisions?

- o   It would be telling to have MSDC data on students/families who leave mid-year and then rank the school they left very highly the following SY.

- o   There is an underemphasizing of people understanding the mission, climate, and culture of a school when providing choice and information on tiers. How do we do a better job of educating the public?

- o   Taking some choice off the table (whether not being able to leave or not being able to enter) is not an option for DCPS, by-right schools.

- o   In some places (Hartford, CT?) there is a drop-dead date after which point students are not allowed to move.

- o   Some movement is due to issues with IEPs, 504s, etc. More cross-sector collaboration around this would be helpful. Streamlining of these processes would give parents of vulnerable children a better idea of what to expect.

- **What are the three most important issues relative to mid-year mobility that the Task Force should tackle?**

- o   Entry and exit are important to understand so that schools are prepared

- o   Minimizing mobility would be great.

- o   Cross-sector, targeted supports for high risk, low income students w. great mobility

- o   LEA payment

- o   How can LEAs enable good choices up front? How can we minimize mid-year transfers?

- **What are the conditions and policies that contribute to the most important issues identified above?**

  - Other localities require some sort of exit process when students leave schools. This allows more information, clean data on where students are going and why.

  - Would be great if LEAs worked together enough to work with OSSE to send data on exiting students to nearby localities to cross-reference entries.

  - If high churn schools are schools of right, what can be done to right this ship?

  - Money following students does not seem to be the right answer either.

  - Law of unintended consequences – how do we make sure that the fixes don't incentivize more movement?

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Group 2
Facilitator: Althea Holford & Amy Lerman
Note Taker: Aaron Parrott
Participants:

- **What are the three most important issues relative to mid-year mobility that the Task Force should tackle?**

  o The kids that are disproportionately affected are at-risk and low income.

  o The biggest chunk is leaving the public school system and it is difficult to distinguish between the reasons for leaving.

  o Do we know the demos of the students that are mobile?

  o Why are so many students exiting our system, or is it so many? I'm not clear on if this is a big deal. Learning whether that is a high number helps understand if it is systemic or epidemic.

  o Do we consider it a problem? One way to think about it is it abnormally high, another way to think about it is just knowing where they are going when they leave via more connection with surrounding counties. Are they somewhere?

  o Couldn't we use CSFA connection to find out more info? We do but it does not account for enough of the students. We still miss a lot of the information.

  o While easier to measure from sector to sector, we are missing big chunks of students to capture where they are going.

  o We should also look at individual schools with the dramatic amounts of churn, dive within the averages to pull out the finer issues underlying mobility.

- **What are the conditions and policies that contribute to the most important issues identified above?**

  o The way in which the payments are structured for charters does not seem to align with enrollment practices that are smart. There is no incentive to enroll new students after the count (mid-year); other school districts get paid on a regular schedule and it is adjusted so that you only get payment for students that are there.

  o But that doesn't solve the push-out issue, since schools with waitlists can still pull from that, not taking a mobile student.

  o Taking from a waitlist for schools that are currently doing it could create more churn since they are not currently doing this.

- I agree that we should fix the money issue; you shouldn't get paid for students that are no longer there. But how do we address serving our hardest to serve students?

- What is the policy for charters that aren't at their enrollment cap and their expectation to take students? Charters are allowed by law to control their own enrollment practices. Would changing the law help this situation?

- The control of enrollment has allowed charters to serve more diverse students and fall in the Category 1 (low entry, low withdrawal).

- Right, but changing the law won't affect this because they are low entry.

- One of the policies that is creating this problem is the invisible line between DC and Maryland (PG County). Creating more fluid lines could be the largest single thing that we do to fix mid-year mobility.

- Most charters don't allow students to come in mid-year – this is an important policy issue that affects.

- Do credits have an influence on whether a student can enroll at a school?

- One of the things about accepting students mid-year that is important is that some charters (high performing) start with 100 and then end at a terminal grade with 40 or 50. They may be good schools either way, but they are certainly not measured on the same standard. If those students are more mobile, they will leave their 'good' option at some point.

- Schools are also dis-incentivized to take older students in testing grades, even though they are not counted in the testing if they were not there an entire year.

- We really need to look at year over year mobility which has policies and outcomes that affect larger populations of students than mid-year mobility.

- The other policy issue we didn't capture are what incentives and disincentives are in place that are helping or hindering serving these students and accepting them.

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Group 3
Facilitator: Aryan Bocquet
Note Taker: Richelle Russell
Participants: Erika Harrell, Kemba Hendrix, Anjali Kulkarni, Bethany Little, Alejandra Vallejo, Shantelle Wright

- **What are the three most important issues relative to mid-year mobility that the Task Force should tackle?**

  o Top two -
    - Funding imbalances – money truly follows the child
    - Transportation issues

  o Runners-up -
    - Accountability – hold LEAs accountable for mobility
    - Built-in entry and exit points
    - Debunk the myth of sector mobility
    - Discipline policies

- **Reflections**

  o A lot of families move out of a school because the travel is too much (i.e., traffic, Metro issues, etc.).

  o What can the district do about that?

  o The city tries to help with this issue through Kids Ride Free (KRF).

  o That is not realistic for younger students.

  o Children shouldn't have to leave their neighborhood to get a quality education.

  o Is the KRF supplement just for children (not the parent to travel with them)?

  o It is just one card for the student.

  o There is also a lot of mobility in the gentrifying neighborhoods. People can't afford the area anymore and have to move.

  o A lot of DCPS schools are also doing this to each other—dropping students and sending them to other DCPS schools. What is the right measure of accountability? Maybe there are built-in entry and exit points during the school year (excluding those families/ students that <u>have</u> to move); it would be easier to prepare for that student's entry into a new school.

  o What about those students whose entry and exit is beyond their control?

o   If there is only one or two times during the year that a student can move, would we see even more movement (i.e. "this is my only chance")? And for those case by case basis (those that <u>have</u> to move), would there be supports put in place to get the student to their original school until the predetermined time?

o   Specified times would be good for students with IEPs; providing buses would also be a way to keep students at their school.

o   Can special ed be expanded to include homeless students so those students can be bused?

o   Through McKinney-Vento, we are required to assist those students to get them to their school.

o   It is interesting that the only students that get busing are those students that are federally-required. It is also interesting that DCPS is gaining students while PCS is losing, so funding is an issue. Schools with a net loss have a surplus of funding while schools with a net gain have a deficit. Can the mobility data get even more granular?

o   Deputy Mayor Niles mentioned that this year we will be looking at the exit code data.

o   DCPS has been working really hard to clean the exit code data.

o   If this misperception exists in the community (perceptions slide), then that is something that we as a task force should work to debunk that myth; it would perhaps decrease mobility.

o   It would be interesting to see if families are leaving the district once their student reaches a certain age in order to go to a better school district. What would make those people stay?

o   What are the discipline issues across sectors? How can we look at school climates/supports?

- **What are the conditions and policies that contribute to the most important issues identified above?**

  o   Disciplinary policies can contribute to churn; what are better and new approaches to discipline policy?

  o   Schools are always expressing reluctance to take students mid-year, even in-boundary students; perhaps a PCS neighborhood preference would reduce churn.

  o   Grade configurations – we need to think about how/when students can enter and exit.

  o   If money truly follows the child, then schools might be more likely to try to keep students; schools would also be more open to taking on new students.

  o   If there are specific times to enter/exit, can there also be a lottery(ies) at that time?

  o   If a school is funded up to a certain number of students, perhaps backfilling should be required (up to capacity)?

- But that doesn't address the issue of mobility.

- True, but not all mobility is negative.

- Can we incentivize schools to keep kids?

- We are working on that – as well as incentives to backfill.