

## **Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force: Meeting 7**

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### **Transfer and Exit Policies Breakout Group**

The facilitator directed breakout group members to move beyond the policies listed on the Universe of Policies sheet but that the breakout group would begin by going through and looking at some of the different policies listed on the worksheet.

- Are entrance policies different than transfer and exit policies?
  - Any of the policies in your handout are toward these three goals (entrance, exit, transfer).

The facilitator read the first option on the sheet: “Centralize enforcement of residency requirements and make verification process more efficient to ensure DC schools are education DC children”

*Comments:*

- If you read the new residency requirements, there is no real change that supports centralized enforcement; clearly we have a residency fraud issue given in-state, out-of-state mobility; it should be under OSSE and using DC tax records.
  - Under the new system it will be centralized and there have been/will be meetings for community input.
  - There is a difference between verification and enforcement of residency requirements; the system would focus on verification.
- Can you use tax records even if you’re not paying taxes? There are still several methods through which a resident can be verified. Tax records are one of several.
- OSSE will proactively verify tax records
  - But if people still use utility payment, what will OSSE do?
  - OSSE can’t enforce that without legislation (but if we enforce this it would be a barrier to undocumented students) and if you turn families away for having the wrong document (i.e. tax records), they might not come back.
- There is an incentive for schools to defraud this system as it currently requires enrollment at the school site; leaving this (enforcement) up to LEAs could create additional fraud. There’s no barrier to proposing a legislative change.

A Task Force member presented an idea to the breakout group: Hanseul could present at a different meeting or Task Force members could submit comments/attend meetings held at OSSE. If there are changes to law that should be made, that would be within the scope of the Task Force to recommend changes.

The group eliminated discussing the first, second and third policy options (“Establishing intake schools to take most/all students entering District mid-year” and “Establishing transition schools for PCS students leaving mid-year”) as they didn’t seem like good solutions for students.

The facilitator read out the fourth policy option, “Enact windows for student movement across DC schools to give parents/families at specific times of year to make school changes,” for the group to discuss.

*Comments:*

- Could happen at the beginning of quarter or semester even though schools are on different timelines.
  - Would people moving within DC schools be treated differently than people moving from out-of-state?
- Transfer windows: parents would not be in support if there were a bullying or safety issue that required an immediate move.
- New Orleans set up specific procedures for students being bullied and other hardships.

The facilitator offered up information on the process in New Orleans: if a school that a parent is looking at is better for the student, two principals can agree to a transfer outside of the limited transfer window. The charter schools came together and jointly made this policy.

*Comments:*

- There are other ways to reduce the mobility: the group is only focusing on kids coming in.
- Some families in DC are quick to move; with a transfer window they might have to take a beat and gain perspective. The group should push to see if this would make sense for DC, perhaps in high school.
- Focus only on families who want to leave a school (for whatever reason that is not safety, bullying, etc.); what about requiring principal agreement and without it, the student can't move?
  - It's not that the student would move (if the idea is to only allow movement once a quarter); there is a separate idea of having a principal to principal move but this is having the LEA be prepared in a different way.
- What about students who move frequently because they are homeless? East of the river this is a reality; the policy has to take this into account. There are accommodations under McKinney-Vento, too.
- There would have to be quite a few exceptions to the rule of only moving once a quarter, etc.
- It would be useful to have more data about why kids are moving.
- The group can't underestimate the parents who would sooner get in trouble rather than send students back to a particular school; there is concern about losing track of kids and families opting out of the education system.
  - A transfer window could exacerbate the drop-out problem.
- Did NOLA see changes this with this policy?
  - They don't approve all hardship requests and mobility rate did go down.

At this point the facilitator read from some notes about the New Orleans district.

- There is an office for students seeking transfer (safety, medical, or guardianship/residency hardship transfers). The transfer must ameliorate the hardship if nothing can be done at the school level. The office approves on case by case basis; of about 500 transfer requests, 55% were granted. They have one full-time staff person managing transfers (and they conduct an October 1 count and a January 1 count). Any transfer after October 1 goes through hardship transfer process and expelled students are placed in one of three alternative schools.

*Comments:*

- The group should consider NOLA system but with the LEA payment process, the system has to dis-incentivize transfers. There are also in-boundary schools or waitlists in NOLA.
- There are concerns about money following students. (Would this overlap too much with the LEA payment process?)
- NOLA system seems paternalistic; how did families react? On the other hand, it could reduce mobility.
- Is this incompatible with waitlists? Families should be able to attend their most preferred schools when space becomes available.
- From experience at KIPP: the school said they had a transfer system and then had a whole bunch of families trying to move schools. The office there couldn't handle it because the structures hadn't been properly step up.
- Most choices will be hardship because the most mobile families are also some of the lowest income families.
- NOLA has no waitlist system; they just have strict placements.
- After a certain time period they should get rid of waitlists. This has been on the table during the LEA payment changes.
  - Under LEA payment there's an incentive to take on students mid-year; but if waitlists are eliminated and then students move out of state, spots open up.

At this point, the facilitator summed up what the group had concluded so far: there could be a centralized placement process that would include both charters and DCPS. It would help students to the best school for them through centralized process. After October 5, any movement that happens goes through centralized placement process, either alongside waitlists with specific parameters or after waitlist is eliminated. This central place would also allow for collection of data on the student movement.

*Comments:*

- Agree with centralized placement process. In addition, a lot of parents don't know if a school is going to be the best fit for their child. Parents need to be able to better understand what resources exist (and the placement office could assist with this).
  - There would need to be more cross-sector collaboration and communication about strengths of different schools.
  - The word "placement" is strong; if they move, are they given choices?
    - Include placement counseling at the office? Placement supports?
  - IEP meetings involve placement where there is supposed to be collaboration; there are parents who don't want to have to talk to one more person who is an official.
- What does this mean for charters legally if they eliminate their waitlists? Some funding is tied to charters accepting students throughout the year (if they are taking students some way other than a wait list they have certain funding closed to them).
- An example: youth reengagement center looks at what is available at that time of year and the needs of students. A specialist goes with student to three options before they make a choice (options are charters and DCPS)
- Adult programs have opened different enrollment periods to get more people to sign up.
  - Placement office or counseling: less paternalistic in because timeframe is more flexible.

The facilitator read the fifth policy option/idea: "Placement of mid-year entries from out-of-state in PCS"

- LEA payment reform will cause charters to want to fill their seats; if waitlists are eliminated charters will want to fill from out-of-state.
- Not all charters have same length of waitlists. Waitlists function to make it easier for charters to know where to find students.
  - Most students who come from out of state are not finding charters.
  - Is it attractive to DCPS to send students coming from out-of-state to charter schools? Then they will re-enroll in charters and not attend DCPS schools, etc.

The facilitator read a summary of the group's ideas so far:

- After some day in October, instead of waitlists, there will be a centralized office through which available options will be presented to students entering or transferring mid-year. The office could place students, present them with different options, and counsel them. Transfers can get denied and sent back to their original school. The system could be modeled after the system in New Orleans. The transfer process would be initiated by the family and there would be a hardship transfer process. The hardship transfer would need to eliminate the hardship.

*Comments:*

- Uncomfortable totally getting rid of waitlists
  - Placement office could trump the waitlist.
- Should get rid of the waitlist otherwise schools will just keep pulling from their waitlist which will keep things unequal and mobile.
- Getting rid of waitlists is unacceptable in a choice environment: if you're number 5 on waitlist and then the next day it's gone, that's unacceptable. My SchoolDC has started to eliminate these problems.
  - There could be seats above and beyond the enrollment ceiling attached to a financial incentive (one seat per grade for out of state to go into round robin lottery); preserves hope and waitlist but also provides opportunities to families coming from out-of-state.
- An explanation: a school cannot enroll beyond their enrollment ceiling and be funded; PCSB approves ceiling when the charter is created. To enroll more students, there has to be an amendment (charters are not paid for going beyond enrollment normally). This could be an opportunity to get an additional money if extra seats given to the out-of-state lottery.
  - Denver does this; it holds onto seats for latecomers (only through August 31)
- Could create a separate bucket of seats: hardship seat is never available for someone in the regular lottery. Example: 100 regular seats and 1 hardship seat (class of 101)
- It would be the function of the placement office to keep people from trying to game the system.
- This doesn't address LEA payment issue.
  - There is already a steep drop off in offers after October 5 (but if money transfers with a kid there will be more).
  - Schools won't do this because they want stability.
- Schools could choose to allocate other seats to out-of-state or hardship if waitlist is done
- When kids come in late in the year, it keeps them out of every non-struggling school; this policy could help the most mobile students find a placement of their choice.
- The group could discuss waitlist elimination in community meetings since there is disagreement.