

Tuesday, September 27, 2016
6:00-8:00pm
Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force
Meeting #7

Attendees:

- Amanda Alexander | Deputy Chief of Elementary Schools, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Angela Copeland | Stuart-Hobson MS parent; public affairs specialist
- John Davis | Chief of Schools, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) (incoming interim DCPS Chancellor)
- Caryn Ernst | Watkins ES, Stuart-Hobson MS parent; former PTA president, Capitol Hill Cluster School; member, Capitol Hill Public School Parent Organization (CHPSPO)
- Erika Harrell | DC Prep PCS parent; Member, MySchoolDC Parent Advisory Council; member, DC School Reform Now; member, PCSB Parent & Alumni Leadership Council (PALC)
- Kaya Henderson | Chancellor, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Kemba Hendrix | Elsie Whitlow Stokes PCS parent; former public and public charter school teacher
- 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)
- Anjali Kulkarni | Deputy Chief, Strategic School Planning, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Emily Lawson | Founder & CEO, DC Prep PCS
- Bethany Little | Murch ES, BASIS PCS parent; Education policy expert
- Scott Pearson | Executive Director, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)
- Ariana Quiñones | Duke Ellington HS, Cesar Chavez PCS parent, education and human services policy consultant, Otero Strategy Group LLC, former member Student Assignment Committee
- Karen Williams | Ward 7 Representative, State Board of Education (SBOE)
- Darren Woodruff | EL Haynes PCS, Benjamin Banneker HS parent ; Chair, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)

Co-Chairs:

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

Facilitator:

- Jim Sandman | President, Legal Services Corporation; former General Counsel, DCPS

Members on the Phone:

- Faith Gibson Hubbard | Chief Student Advocate, State Board of Education (SBOE); former member, Student Assignment Committee

Members not in Attendance:

- Shanita Burney | Deputy Chief, Community Engagement, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)

- Shantelle Wright | Founder & CEO, Achievement Prep PCS; Chair, DC Association of Public Charter Schools
- Lars Beck | CEO, Scholar Academies and DC Scholars
- Carlie Fisherow | Executive Director, Scholar Academies and DC Scholars
- Rod Boggs | Executive Director, Washington Lawyer’s Committee
- Charlene Drew-Jarvis | Graduate, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS); Senior Advisor, KIPP DC PCS; former Ward 4 City Councilwoman
- Evelyn Boyd Simmons | Francis-Stevens parent; W2 Education Network; former member, Student Assignment Committee; President, Logan Circle Community Association
- Alejandra Vallejo | Bancroft ES parent; Chair, Bancroft ES Local School Advisory Team (LSAT)

Staff:

- Claudia Luján | Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Jennifer Comey | Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Cat Peretti | Executive Director, MySchoolDC (MSDC), Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Rebecca Lee | Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Hannah Holliday | Leadership for Education Equity Fellow, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Richelle Russell | Education Pioneers Data Analyst Fellow, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)

Support Team:

- Amber Saddler | EducationCounsel, LLC
- Terri Taylor | EducationCounsel, LLC

Meeting Summary:

Announcements:

Deputy Mayor Niles made several announcements about the Task Force, including that this meeting would be Kaya Henderson’s last meeting and that Lars Beck is stepping down from DC Scholars and the Task Force. Carlie Fisherow, the Executive Director for the D.C. Region will be taking his place on the Task Force. Mr. Sandman then reviewed the feedback that was received from Task Force members, which included comments about picking up the pace of the Task Force’s work, making more strawman proposals for the Task Force to discuss, encouraging members to be more direct during the meetings, and leveraging the time between meetings more effectively.

Goals, Group Norms & Expectations:

Mr. Sandman went over the high-level Task Force goals before diving into the agenda and the specific goals of the meeting. When reviewing the high-level goals, he highlighted the focus of the current meeting and the past few meetings: promoting enrollment stability. Mr. Sandman also pointed out that while the Task Force has been focusing on the one goal, all of the goals are interconnected. He also noted that the Task Force has taken on “promoting enrollment stability” as its focus in an effort to address the perception that charter schools push students out and into DCPS schools. He then reviewed the group norms and expectations and the purpose of the Task Force’s work.

In response to the comment that there is a perception that charters push students out, concern was voiced that the Task Force was set up to address the “problem” of charters but that the biggest enrollment movement is new students moving into and out of the District (often referred to as in and out of state), not movement from charters to DCPS and that is what the focus should be on at these meetings. Mr. Sandman noted that this would be important to bring up in the break-out groups and highlighted the importance of candid conversations.

Policy Option Reintroduction:

Claudia Luján reviewed the original policy options that came out of the group’s discussion of data around mobility. Members signed up for one of the five original policy option categories prior to the meeting:

- Intake policies
- Transfer policies
- Exit policies
- By-right charter
- Eliminate post-K age cut-offs

Post-Kindergarten cut-offs did not elicit much interest from the task force members, so that option would not be discussed tonight. This policy option already has some momentum behind them already outside of the Task Force. The focus of this meeting would be on the following two policy options:

- Transfer and exit policies
- By-right charter schools

Ms. Luján briefly reviewed the two policy options after a member requested an overview of each. She explained that transfer and exit policies could be broadly applied or applied only to certain types of schools while the concept of by-right charter school policy refers to certain charter schools opting into having boundaries and guaranteeing students enrollment who live within that boundary at any time throughout the school year. Before the Task Force members moved into breakout groups for the majority of the meeting, several members had questions and comments:

Comments/Questions:

- A Task Force member pointed out that they did not want the age cut-off to fall off the list because they thought it was an obvious fix, but didn’t need to necessarily be talked about during the meetings.
 - It was also suggested that there may be other enrollment restrictions that are worth looking at to promote enrollment stability. The member also suggested that the Task Force receive some pre-meeting readings on different entrance restrictions.
- A Task Force member asked how the by-right charter policy would fit into the boundary process that just occurred.
 - Ms. Luján said that it would trigger an implementation question and would need to be taken into consideration. She suggested thinking of using by-right charter policy like a scalpel to directly address the problem rather than implementing one policy across all schools.
- A Task Force member also asked about when the Task Force would be discussing the 5th/6th grade disconnect between DCPS and charters.

- Ms. Luján said that it can fit in wherever the Task Force thinks it fits best (be it Transfer/Exit policies or another policy).
- It was also pointed out the transfer and exit policies don't have to be specific to charter-DCPS; they can also address in/out-of-state transfers.
- Ms. Luján asked that they keep in mind the community and stakeholder engagement process during the breakout group discussions of the policy options.

Break-out Group Notes: The high level points of each breakout discussion are as follows:

By-Right Charter School Break-Out Group:

Group members: Erika Harrell, Kemba Hendrix, Melissa Kim, Jim Sandman, Anthony Williams, Darren Woodruff

- The Task Force could propose a pilot program in which a charter school that is already established in DC opens a campus with a by-right zone around the school.
- In order to guarantee that the public charter has a facility, the school could take over a low-performing DCPS school or the charter school could take over an empty DCPS building.
- In order for this to be viable, the public charter school would need to be guaranteed a facility in an area where they want to serve that student population; they would need additional funding for facilities maintenance; and they would need to maintain autonomy in curriculum, facility control, and the ability to close low-performing schools.
- Follow-up discussion topics:
 - Revisit a neighborhood preference in the lottery.
 - Develop some working definitions.

Transfer and Exit Policies Break-Out Group:

Group members: Amanda Alexander, Angela Copeland, John Davis, Caryn Ernst, Irene Holtzman, Faith Gibson Hubbard, Hanseul Kang, Anjali Kulkarni, Bethany Little, Emily Lawson, Jennifer Niles, Scott Pearson, Ariana Quiñones, Karen Williams

- The Task Force could propose a central transfer office that manages students transferring into public schools (both PCS and DCPS) from out-of-state or between LEAs to streamline the transfer process, increase the options for transferring students, and reduce the number of students transferring into DPCS from out of state.
- There would be hardship transfers for students with medical/safety issues, residence changes, etc. Charter schools would reserve seats for these hardship/out-of-state transfers.
- The central transfer office would ensure that the transfer system is fair and would provide information and several enrollment options to students and families through counseling.
- Follow-up discussion topics:
 - Should waitlists be eliminated?
 - How would charter schools enroll hardship transfers?
 - Would there be “round-robin” lottery system for placing transfers into charter schools?
 - How would the transfer office function within preexisting structures?

Breakout Group Report Out:

Upon reconvening, the breakout groups communicated the following ideas and members of the other groups asked questions:

Group 1: Transfer/exit policies

- The breakout group agreed that intake schools, transfer schools, and transfer windows would not work in the public school system in the District for a variety of reasons. Instead, students transferring from out-of-state or across LEAs would go through a transfer office.
- This office would also collect data on the mobile students to help the District continue to address student mobility and would be a repository of information about schools for families looking to find their students the best possible placements.
- The option to eliminate waitlists at some point in October was put on the table by some members of the breakout group but other members suggested allowing schools to designate seats above their enrollment ceilings as hardship/transfer seats; it has not been decided if having hardship/transfer seats should be optional or required.
- A member of the other breakout group asked if this office would address within LEA transfers.
- The group requested that Ms. Kang present on the new residency regulations, as residency fraud issues relate to the transfer process. DME Niles suggested that all members of the Task Force engage with the OSSE feedback meetings being held throughout October.

Group 2: By-right charter schools

- The breakout group discussed the definition of a school-of-right and whether being a school-of-right removes the option to be a citywide school. There was concern over the idea that being a school-of-right would take away a charter school's right to be a citywide school. There was also concern that charter schools offer what they offer because they are citywide schools.
- The breakout group raised the questions around how a charter school that wanted serve a community and become a by-right school would get a building and what the requirements would be for a charter school to become a neighborhood school-of-right.
- A breakout group member raised the point that the idea of creating by-right charter schools could be scary to parents who might be concerned about increased student mobility within a by-right charter school. However, the point was also made that creating by-right charter schools could expand opportunities for students within their neighborhoods.
- The breakout group also differentiated between by-right and a neighborhood preference when discussing the lottery and wanted to revisit the preference option during a later discussion.
- Another idea that came from the breakout group discussion was the idea of having a charter school partner with a DCPS school within the same neighborhood. The purpose of this partnership would be to bring high-quality programs to more students. It was noted that this kind of partnership would only be appropriate in some cases and if the two schools wanted to collaborate.
 - A Task Force member from the other breakout group commented that this idea assumes that all charter schools have high-quality programs.
- The breakout group reported out that facilities were a large factor in their discussion: if a school wants to serve a specific student population, they need to be guaranteed a building in that neighborhood. They mentioned that more co-planning between DCPS and PCS would be needed to decide where a by-right charter school would go and if it would take over a low-performing school or take over an empty DCPS building.

- It was noted that the goal would be to share in the educating of high-need students rather than somehow shifting all of them to either DCPS or PCS, but that there are still many concerns about how this could be accomplished through by-right charter schools.

Next Steps:

DME Niles talked through several transitions on the Task Force and on the DME staff as well as a few next steps:

- Cluida Luján will be transitioning to DCPS and off of the Task Force staff but she plans to keep up with the Task Force.
- Task Force members should feel free to look over the proposed residency verification information on OSSE's website and submit comments. (The main meeting that OSSE held has passed but there is still time for public comment.)
- The DME team will reach out to the Task Force members to schedule breakout group calls before the October meeting. The calls will focus on continuing the discussions from the September meeting in preparation for the October meeting and community engagement in November.
- The October 25, 2016 Task Force meeting will be held at the Department of For-Hire Vehicles; the DME team will send out more information to the Task Force about the October meeting and the proposed Task Force retreat.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.