

**Conference Call 1: Thursday, December 1, 2016**  
**Conference Call 2: Friday, December 2, 2016**  
**Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force**  
**Meeting #9**  
**RESCHEDULED from Tuesday, November 22, 2016**

**Attendees:**

**Conference Call 1:**

- 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)
- Faith Gibson Hubbard | Chief Student Advocate, State Board of Education (SBOE); former member, Student Assignment Committee
- 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)
- Emily Lawson | Founder & CEO, DC Prep PCS
- Scott Pearson | Executive Director, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)
- Facilitator Jim Sandman | President, Legal Services Corporation; former General Counsel, DCPS
- 1 member of the public

**Conference Call 2:**

- Shanita Burney | Deputy Chief, Community Engagement, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Charlene Drew-Jarvis | Graduate, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS); Senior Advisor, KIPP DC PCS; former Ward 4 City Councilwoman
- Irene Holtzman | Executive Director, Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS)
- Anjali Kulkarni | Deputy Chief, Strategic School Planning, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Co-Chair Anthony Williams | CEO & Executive Director, Federal City Council; former Mayor
- 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)
- 2 members of the public

**Members Unable to Participate in Conference Calls:**

- Amanda Alexander | Deputy Chief of Elementary Schools, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Evelyn Boyd Simmons | Francis-Stevens parent; W2 Education Network; former member, Student Assignment Committee; President, Logan Circle Community Association
- Angela Copeland | Stuart-Hobson MS parent; public affairs specialist
- Carlie Fisherow | Executive Director, Scholar Academies and DC Scholars
- Erika Harrell | DC Prep PCS parent; Member, MySchoolDC Parent Advisory Council; member, DC School Reform Now; member, PCSB Parent & Alumni Leadership Council (PALC)
- Hanseul Kang | State Superintendent of Education

- Melissa Kim | Chief Academic Officer, Secondary Schools, KIPP DC; former principal, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Bethany Little | Murch ES, BASIS PCS parent; Education policy expert
- Ariana Quiñones | Duke Ellington HS, Cesar Chavez PCS parent, education and human services policy consultant, Otero Strategy Group LLC, former member Student Assignment Committee
- Alejandra Vallejo | Bancroft ES parent; Chair, Bancroft ES Local School Advisory Team (LSAT)
- Shantelle Wright | Founder & CEO, Achievement Prep PCS; Chair, DC Association of Public Charter Schools

**Staff:**

- Jennifer Comey | Senior 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)
- Amy Lerman | Director of Operations, My School DC (MSDC), Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Aaron Parrott | Data Manager, My School DC (MSDC), Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- Cat Peretti | Executive Director, MySchoolDC (MSDC), Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)

**Support Team:**

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

**Call Summary\*:**

*\*Note: both calls had the same agenda. Comments have been included for each of the calls.*

The call began with Jenn Comey going over the agenda and goals for the call, which included reviewing the most recent draft of the policy proposal and identifying key topics and questions to bring to the community. She reiterated the goals of the Task Force and the purpose of its work.

**Centralized Entry, Transfer, and Exit Strawman Overview**

Ms. Comey took a few moments to go through the Task Force members' ratings of different aspects of the policy from the November Retreat before going over the newest iteration of the policy proposal. She explained rating process from the retreat, reminding the Task Force members on the calls that the ratings of 1 or 2 demonstrated agreement and ratings of 3 and 4 demonstrated disagreement with the components of the policy. She went through each component rated by the Task Force (slide 9), which starts with the underlying assumptions of the policy proposal.

While the majority of Task Force members were in agreement with the underlying assumptions of the policy proposal, several were concerned about making participation in the transfer process voluntary. She also noted that component 4 (Should participating LEAs use a uniform method for identifying open seats?) had the lowest level of agreement with 67% of Task Force members rating it a 1 or 2. According to the comments from the Retreat, Task Force members are concerned about how this would work for in-boundary schools. She also highlighted that 11 of the 16 Task Force members who commented about

how waitlists should be implemented noted that they believed waitlists should be eliminated after a certain date. She encouraged Task Force members to look at the more detailed comments summaries on the handout (Policy Rating Summary Retreat) and underscored the importance of collecting feedback from the community and from the school leader focus groups on the concerns raised by the Task Force members.

***Comments/Questions, Call 1:***

- Other members might have voiced dissent if they had been there; they are not ready to rubber stamp the components of the policy.
  - Ms. Comey encouraged Task Force members to raise their concerns during the call, and also submit any concerns to her/DME staff afterwards.
- When the Task Force talked about these components, the group still hadn't achieved consensus on if they are working towards the same objectives. It is important for the group to go back and talk about the goals that the policy is trying to accomplish. The group should be continuously evaluating as we go forward on agreed upon objectives.
  - The group later discussed the objectives/goals/purpose in more detail.
- The phrase "mid-year and between years" should be used. The goal of making sure schools are better administratively prepared that should be moved up in the list of goals/purposes. There should also be a goal about reducing financial incentives for mid-year exits from charter schools.
  - Including a goal about reducing the financial incentives for mid-year exits from charter schools assumes that there are financial incentives and these haven't been proven by the data. There is no clear link to financial incentives and why students are mobile.
  - Work should be done to figure out the reasons why students are moving and see what financial incentives do exist.
  - DCPS wants to spread responsibility and members of the Task Force are being responsive by moving kids uniformly across both sectors to reduce the concentration of mobile students in particular schools.
- The Task Force discussed better supporting kids at the last meeting and there was enthusiasm around this; however, it has not been included in the purposes of the policy proposal.

***Comments/Questions, Call 2:*** n/a

**Slide 11: Mid-Year Entry, Transfer, & Exit Policy Proposal Purpose:**

Ms. Comey noted that there was enthusiasm around including more resources for schools during the discussion of the 5<sup>th</sup> goal and she suspected that this would be what the Task Force would address next. She then went over the policy proposal purpose slide (slide 11) to help frame how the Task Force is thinking about the purpose of the policy. She explained that the DME staff created a new framing of the purposes – separating them into purposes for Schools and for Students and Families.

***Comments/Questions, Call 1:***

- The conversation about the purpose of the policy should include more than just sharing information between schools; it's about schools having resources they need so they can adequately support mid-year transfer students acclimating into the culture and climate of the school.
- The process needs to make sure kids are linked up to the services they need. Many students are facing similar barriers that students who drop-out face. Counseling is not just a conversation about what their school choices are; it should include a discussion of what the students' barriers are and what the school and the administration can do to stabilize that student.

***Comments/Questions, Call 2:***

- Under the third bullet on the purposes for Schools, it should not just say "timely information," it should mention more resources to support the schools.
- Under the third bullet on the purposes for Parents & Students, it should include having a wider array of school support services. Students who are transferring often have behavioral problems, exposure to adverse environmental circumstances, and a need for many different kinds of supports when entering new schools.
- Under second bullet on the purposes for schools, some DCPS stakeholders feel strongly against this particular element of proposed policies that it would negatively impact DCPS in terms of enrollment. It could take away the sense of DCPS as schools of right and serving all children.

Ms. Comey noted that one of the things the DME staff is working on is modeling the impact of the centralized process. Any potential impact may also depend on whether or not schools still have waitlists under the new system. She also mentioned that DCPS had previously been in favor of more equitably distributing the population of transfer students.

- The position of DCPS has not changed, but it is important to think about what key stakeholders are saying.

Ms. Comey explained that this concern has been brought up in the previous call. Task Force members on that call discussed that the process is not about facilitating mid-year transfers but about helping new students and hardship students.

- Q: Will the school leaders (in the focus groups) get the information the Task Force got that shows that the largest part of this issue is the in and out of state movement rather than DC students transferring to another DC school?
  - A: Yes and they will be able to see that there are also a large number of DCPS to DCPS transfers.
- Q: Is there going to be a data update from the current school year to see how the lottery went this year and where students enrolled?
  - A: This is a good suggestion. The staff will attempt to update the data.
- Q: Are there some schools that are better equipped to handle students who that identifiable problems?

- A: Ultimately, all schools should serve all kids and be equipped to do so. The idea of counseling is that there could be a way to help families and students with whatever barriers or supports are necessary or helpful to the students (transportation, curriculum, etc.)
- Q: Is this referring mostly to transfers in the wards East of the River, right?
  - A: All but two schools East of the River experience high levels of churn. Cardozo and CHEC also experience churn but the largest percentage of high churn schools are in Wards 7 and 8.

Ms. Comey noted that the Task Force should ask pointed questions to get at what the community needs and what would be helpful.

***Comments/Questions, Call 1:***

- This Task Force member was feeling some unease about idea of funneling students to specific kinds of schools. On the one hand, matching kids with what addresses their needs is important; on the other hand, charter enrollment is through lottery and have some amount of randomization for who they take in throughout the year. This sets up some possible tensions for public charter schools.
- The Task Force should make it clear that this process is only meant for new students or hardship cases and students who have been expelled. The process is not about facilitating mid-year transfers for everyone.
  - Attention should be focus just on students coming in mid-year rather than on between/within LEA transfers.
- Something should be included in the goals about working to reduce mobility, given that the policy could actually increase mobility.
  - The policy needs to say this centralized transfer process is part of a broader process to reduce and manage mobility.
- One of the goals should be for the District to decide what an acceptable level of student mobility is for DC.

***Comments/Questions, Call 2:*** n/a

**Slides 12 & 13: Mid-Year Entry, Transfer, and Exit Policy Action Steps & Parameters:**

Ms. Comey brought up the point that the Task Force does not yet understand student mobility enough to make a judgment of what an acceptable threshold could be. She then recommended pausing the discussion on the reduction propose but noted that it is a key part of the puzzle and one that the Task Force may eventually address after the group have collected additional data. She then spent a few minutes clarifying the Mid-Year Entry, Transfer, Exit Action Steps handout (slides 12 & 13) as a way to clarify what the policy proposal intends to do for someone who is new to looking at or thinking about the centralized transfer process. She noted that the portions in red are components of the policy that particularly need community feedback.

**Comments/Questions, Call 1:** n/a

**Comments/Questions, Call 2:**

- Q: Starting in the first year, hardship students would trump waitlist kids?
  - A: Students experiencing hardship circumstances would be able to access hardship seats, which would be separate from seats open to students on the waitlist.

**Slide 14: Potential Key Questions/Issue Areas for Community Feedback:**

Ms. Comey then turned the group's attention to thinking through questions for the community and the focus groups:

**Comments/Questions, Call 1:**

- Feedback should be collected first on the objectives and purposes of the policy. The community needs to know the basics of why there would be a centralized system and then what it's trying to address.
- It is important to highlight that the process is not designed for the person who wants to move their child mid-year. It needs to be presented in the context of people who have to transfer mid-year and helping them transfer in a more organized, clear way.
- Q: Are these questions (slide 14) specifically going to the community?
  - A: There are the questions the group has been tackling internally and that could be posed to community members
- Q: Will the Task Force get to see and give feedback on the plan for community engagement?
  - A: Yes, in the next few slides.

**Comments/Questions, Call 2:**

- Q: Will members of the community have access to knowledge about what kind of impact these policies could have when answering these questions?
  - A: There are plans to model the impact of these policies which may or may not be ready in time for the community meetings.
- Q: Is the community going to be provided with an outline of what currently happens to better illustrate what impacts this centralized transfer process could have? The community should know what happens to students who are new or who are switching school?
  - A: Would a chart with the status quo on one side and the proposed changes on the other cover this? It is likely that the modeling and analysis will not be completed by the time the community meetings are held.
- Q: Will charter principals and DCPS principals participate in the same focus group?
  - Would it be worth having separate groups for charter and DCPS principals, given their separate enrollment policies?
    - Separate groups for charter and DCPS principals would allow for quicker, stronger, more direct feedback from both groups. There should also be a focus

group that brings those groups together to see what the challenge of having them all in one room together is.

### **Review: Community Engagement Process**

Ms. Comey talked through the plan for community engagement similar to the chancellor search process and the boundaries process, and noted that much of the outreach for the community engagement would be done by working with pre-existing groups. She also noted that two of the three groups are scheduled to occur at locations East of the River.

### ***Comments/Questions, Call 1:***

- The community engagement should include the ward-based education councils and should not forget to engage with S.H.A.P.P.E. (Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals, and Educators) and DCPS principals, among others.
- Given that a key question to be answered is whether or not to eliminate waitlists, all charter school leaders need to have the opportunity to provide input.
- There should be time upfront for education leaders to discuss the policies and make recommendations. There should then be time for the Task Force to revise the policy based on the feedback before taking the policy proposal out to the broader community.

### ***Comments/Questions, Call 2:***

- The briefs and information given to the community need to incorporate the feedback of the focus groups.
- Members of the Task Force voiced support for having two meetings East of the River and were interested in helping bring people out.
- Having two meetings East of the River makes a statement on how valuable feedback from Wards 7 and 8 is. However, it might be good to focus on one, well-attended meeting instead of two. It is harder to get same level of attendance at two meetings.
- The group should take a critical look at the table discussion format. During the chancellor search and the budget forums, the discussions were not as rich as they could have been for a variety of reasons (inexperienced facilitators, etc.)
- These meetings might not be as large as other community meetings because the issue is less mobilizing.
- An important part of the planning of the meetings is making sure the right people facilitate the meetings. Some people have better facilitation skills or more information that helps to have a richer discussion.

Call 1: Ms. Comey thanked the Task Force members for their time and noted that the second call would have the same agenda as the first call. The first conference call ended at 2:01pm.

Call 2: Ms. Comey thanked the Task Force members for their time. The second conference call ended at 4:59pm.