

DRAFT
Advisory Committee on Student Assignment: Meeting Summary
Meeting #7, May 6, 2014
Thurgood Marshall Center, 1816 12th Street, NW, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Welcome and Membership News

Deputy Mayor Abigail Smith welcomed the group, remarking that they did not meet in April to make time for the six Community Working Groups. She thanked all the members who attended one or all of those meetings.

Ms. Smith confirmed the resignation of Co-Chair John Hill, who had to withdraw. He was not able to manage the time required because of increasing duties that were taking him out of the District. Not having a co-chair has its disadvantages, but getting another individual caught up to speed with the volume of information and the depth of the Committee's work did not seem possible. She also relayed the resignation of Advisory Committee member Dianne Piche, of the Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights. Ms. Piche moved out of the District. Even though she is no longer a member, it is hoped she will be available to the Technical Team as a consultant on substantive civil rights issues throughout the process.

The Deputy Mayor again reached out to all members to meet with them individually for coffee; a number of these meetings have been arranged. Please e-mail and we'll set up a time.

Members' Commentary and Questions on Welcome and Membership News

- One member thanked the Deputy Mayor for her leadership and her closest staff for their hard work on the Student Assignment project and for being resoundingly transparent and incredibly helpful in making themselves available.

Meeting Goals and Agenda

Ms. Smith remarked on the extraordinary size of the committee meeting packages which included all of the hand-outs from the Community Working Groups in addition to materials for the current meeting. The goals of the May 6th meeting were to:

- Provide overview of the feedback on policy examples from the 6 working groups
- Work to find consensus on the proposed preliminary recommendations for consideration by the Committee
- Share first round of impact analysis related to the preliminary recommendations
- Agree on next steps

The DME asked everyone to make an effort to voice their perspectives even though they may not have total clarity on the issues because it is important to hear from everyone.

Summary of Input from Six Community Working Groups

Mary Filardo, Executive Director of 21st Century School Fund and part of the Technical Team, provided an overview of participants in the Community Working Groups (see the Power Point presentation attached for details).

There were a total of 410 participants in the first round of meetings (Dunbar and Anacostia were on April 5th and April 8th at Coolidge). There were fewer attendees at Anacostia than at Dunbar and Coolidge. However, the numbers at Anacostia went up substantially for the second round of Community Working Group meetings (April 24, Coolidge and April 28th Dunbar and Anacostia) thanks to efforts by Advisory Committee members. While the total number of participants at the second round of Community Working Group meetings went down a bit to 389. Most participants identified themselves as a “parent” with the next highest type of participant as “community member.”

Input was also secured through www.EngageDC.org, the Code for DC web application-www.ourdcschools.org, various community outreach forums, e-mails and letters from community groups and individuals. Hundreds of comments about the boundaries from Code for DC have been downloaded and are being reviewed. In the materials provided at this meeting are the tallies of the responses from the surveys of participants at the Community Working Groups, Round 2, as well as the transcription of the specific comments provided on the work sheets that were prepared by ReingoldLink.

The Advisory Committee is still seeking input. The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education and Technical Team will continue to do additional outreach in Wards 7 and 8 through the Education Council meetings, the ANC's, the Ward Democrats meetings and the Eastland Gardens Civic Association.

The DME will be working with DCPS to increase outreach and they are working with the Family Collaboratives to identify events which parents will be attending in an effort to do a mini-version of the Community Working Group meetings.

People who attended the Community Working Groups embraced the opportunity to talk with each other about public education in the District. This was very positive in itself. Very broadly distilled, their reactions to the policy examples were generally:

- Families wanted predictability, but they also wanted other options if their local schools did not meet the needs of their children.
- They wanted a city where they had connections to their neighborhood, but also wanted a city that provides a fair deal for everyone. There was a clear consensus for equity in the distribution of programs, funding, and facilities, etc.
- The greatest dismay exhibited was people asking why the District is focusing on student assignment when school quality is really the crux of the dilemma.
- There were enormous concerns expressed about some specific boundaries or feeders.

- Anything that substituted a right with a lottery elicited great angst.
- There is a clear conflict between choice and neighborhood predictability.

In refining the policy examples, the Committee needs to determine how public input informs the Advisory Committee recommendation.

Members Comments and Questions on Summary of Input

- The Technical Team was asked if the community feedback information is public and will be on the DME's website.
 - *It will be available eventually but the Technical Team will first have to redact identifying information because people may not have expected their comments to be public.*

The Advisory Committee Members expressed concern about the varying levels of participation and the concern about parents and communities that have not been engaged and discussed how best to engage those who have been unengaged up until this point in time:

- For outreach in Wards 7 and 8, ANC meetings may not be best forum because parents generally don't go to them. It might be better to hold meetings in schools, asking a principal to host it and call it something other than "Student Assignment". People who should know about the process do not seem to be getting the word.
- Does the meeting attendance information breakdown where people are coming from for the community working groups?
 - *It is on the power point and is available in the big rainbow chart displayed at the 2nd round of meetings - -this is in the meeting packet.*
- When does the general public know of these changes? Some of us have meetings with affected schools coming right up.
- What happens when certain communities don't weigh in? There were more than 70 people at Anacostia but very few parents - - more parents came from Beers than from JC Nalle, for instance.
- We could call the principals of some of the schools where we know we have engaged parents and ask for community meetings to be set up there.
- Does this project have the budget to survey parents by going door to door in Wards 7 and 8 since these wards have most of the public school students and have been the least engaged?

- *The Deputy Mayor acknowledged that it is a significant problem that we haven't gotten the level of engagement from certain communities. She indicated that they had explored other approaches to collecting input, but didn't see how it could substitute for a three hour community meeting.*
- *The DME's office could try to find the resources to do something else but the question is what the best strategy would be.*
- *It is not so much about the budget available but the availability of individuals with the level of skill and their time and effort. Getting the right people to staff outreach is a challenge.*
- On the other hand, shouldn't the people who have gone to the trouble to get to a meeting have their opinions weighted more heavily?
- I have the luxury of making it to meetings - - and a lot of people don't have that luxury. I find it a failure to acknowledge (or ignorance of) the difficulty that other families' experience and it is somewhat offensive. We do need more outreach in Wards 7 and 8 and other wards as well. There is a whole contingent of community members that need to be listened to; we do need to reach out; access to the internet and information really is a problem for some families.

School Boundaries, Preliminary Proposal

Mary Filardo presented the elements of the preliminary proposal.

With respect to the boundaries, the expectation is that elementary school boundaries will encompass their feeder middle school boundaries, and adding the middle school feeders together will make up the high school boundary. This pyramid will no longer include any overlapping boundaries, whereas currently 17% of students have multiple rights to more than one school at the elementary and PS-8 level. This is a key rationale for the proposal, and it is very predictable and intended to strengthen families and neighborhoods by better connecting schools to their communities. There are inherent challenges and concerns with this student assignment approach as it may limit access to quality schools for students who do not have a strong feeder pattern, and it could exacerbate racial and economic segregation. However, this is likely the direction of where the recommendations are going depending on the will of the Advisory Committee.

Members Commentary and Questions on School Boundaries, Preliminary Proposal

- There are real walkability issues east of the river so transportation is something the Committee needs to take into consideration. Wards 7 and 8 are generally very hilly and primarily not laid out in a grid; there are long, relatively empty distances – walking a mile is very different from walking a mile in the more

central portions of the city where things are dense and busy. Routes are set to get people in and out of Wards 7 and 8, but they are not set up to get people around these wards. It is a completely different terrain. Although it is farther, Eastern is easier to get to for many parts of Ward 7 compared to Anacostia and Woodson because it is a direct route on the East Capitol Street bus. Limiting Eastern to the Ward 6 area only will really limit access for students east of the river. The problem is the challenge of the routes, not proximity.

- There are designated Metro busses at school opening and closing times for Wilson students who come from the 14th and Kennedy Street area and the Mt. Pleasant area.
 - *Transportation is certainly something to be added to stakeholder concerns. We will certainly have to figure out how to address this issue, particularly the problem of Eastern and Woodson.*
- One member explained that at one of the Community Working Group meetings she attended she was struck by the fervor around neighborhood schools. But she was concerned that it was putting a cloud on earlier conversations around equity that included enhanced choice zones and conversations about locating additional programs to ameliorate inequity. She was concerned that the racial and socio-economic split in the city continues to grow and we are still living in completely separate worlds. She understands the angst around predictability, but the Committee may be pulling the other door shut. The Committee is not charged with addressing quality, but if we just deal with only boundaries then we will have lost an opportunity for positive change.
- I thought data and feedback was coming around to support a matter-of-right system. We have to make a recommendation on the general direction we are heading and come up with a detailed recommendation by May or June. People in Wards 7 and 8 didn't say anything that radically different than what was said at Dunbar and Coolidge. Could we come to an agreement about some things such as providing dual rights where a specialty elementary school does not suit a particular family so their children could attend the neighboring school or the next closest school?
 - *We've been talking about the impact on individual families not asking about the challenges being raised in this meeting. That's the challenge; the Committee has to make a recommendation with less than perfect input. It is up to the Committee to say: "OK, we've heard enough to make a decision; I don't think I'm going to hear anything new". The Committee ultimately needs to get its collective thoughts on where you stand and take a position.*
- Moving Bancroft out of the Deal boundary will be an earthquake. Where did that idea come from?

- *It is a matter of looking at capacities and the viability of Coolidge and Roosevelt. We will come back to this proposal; it is a dance around what makes sense in the near term and where we want to finally end up as a city in the long-term.*

School Boundaries - Impact Analysis

Jenn Comey from the Office of the Deputy Mayor and part of the Technical Team provided an overview of the policy proposals impact analysis.

As part of the impact analysis by the DME and the Urban Institute, the Technical Team looked at how the preliminary elementary school boundary changes would affect the access rights of current students to schools (refer to Power Point slides 13, 14, 15).

The analysis takes into account all public elementary school students living within the boundaries, and doesn't distinguish whether or not they attended the in-boundary school. Thus the analysis simply looks at students' rights to attend a school by virtue of their address. The DME will share the spreadsheet behind the data if others want it. The Advisory Committee members were advised that the map with yellow, blue and green dots in their materials was aligned to the data tables and charts.

Out of all public school students in SY2013-14, the proposed boundaries would reassign 14% (approximately ~6K) of elementary students to a different school boundary than they currently have a right to now. Another 17% (approximately ~8K) of elementary public school students would be assigned to one school boundary from previous multiple options they had in the past. Finally, 69% (approximately ~32K) elementary public school students would experience no change at all and their boundary would stay the same. Ward 1 has the greatest number of students being assigned to a new school under the proposal. Ward 5 has the greatest number of students' assigned to just one boundary from previous multiple boundary options, due to the fact that Ward 5 experienced a large number of closures over the past eight years and boundaries consolidated producing dual rights.

In addition to analyzing how many elementary students would be impacted from a rights perspective, the Technical Team also looked at other metrics to measure students' impact by the proposed boundary changes from several different perspectives, such as walkability, academic performance [measured by the Median Growth Percentile (MGP)], diversity [including racial/ethnic diversity and income diversity (defined as % of at-risk students)], and access to modernized schools.

- The findings were that: Citywide, students were not largely impacted when looking at the several different metrics, and more than two-thirds of the affected elementary school students would have the right to a new school boundary that is comparable to their current right across the give metrics. However, the results did vary at the Ward level. For instance, in terms of walk distance, 30% of affected elementary students in Ward 8, 24% of affected students in Ward 3, and 22% of affected students in Ward 1

would have a shorter walk distance under the proposed boundaries compared to their current boundary. Alternatively, 40% of affected elementary students in Ward 3 would have a longer walk distance than they do now but it affects a relatively small number of students (approx. ~100 students). Affected elementary students in Wards 1, 7 and 8 have the largest number of students who are assigned to schools with lower MGP scores compared to what they are currently assigned to, however almost all of the affected elementary students (88%) would be reassigned to an elementary school with a similar MGP score. Most affected elementary school students would be reassigned to an elementary school boundary with comparable racial/ethnic diversity, and no affected elementary school students would be assigned to a school with lower racial ethnic diversity. In addition, 21% of affected Ward 4 elementary school students and 15% of affected Ward 6 students would be reassigned to elementary school boundaries with higher racial/ethnic diversity.

Because of the racial make-up of most of the city it would take a great deal of change to make a difference in diversity.

The DME and the Technical Team will continue to analyze data to understand how the proposed boundary and feeder proposals will impact middle school and high school students on the same metrics presented. The same analysis will be done on the next round of school boundary adjustments.

Members Commentary and Questions on Impact Analysis

- One member noted that the students currently attending charter schools have already opted out of the system and therefore will not be impacted and thus questioned whether they should be included in the impact analysis.
 - *The Technical Team can look into cutting the data different ways and create a DCPS only impact analysis to exclude those who opted out of their neighborhood school(s) of right.*
- Why are we seeing large areas where students lost multiple rights (the yellow dots on the map)?
 - *Those are primarily the areas where there were school closings and the boundaries were not changed and instead granted students dual rights. Also there were areas where middle school boundaries converted to PK3-8th grade and the entire former middle school boundary granted rights to elementary school students as well, creating a large swath of dual rights in certain areas.*
- What about looking at charters as compared to DCPS as almost half of the students are in charter schools already and are not affected?
- Walkability also depends on your neighborhood; I know that for some students traveling two tenths of a mile further to your school of right isn't too big of a

burden, but in Wards 5, 7, and 8—these students are already traveling long distances so any additional traveling will be more difficult for these areas.

- People’s experience with their rights is reflected in whether they exercise those rights.
- Is all this data available to the Advisory Committee and to the public? There is a fair amount of information that you need and it all has to be gathered and synthesized.
 - *We have the information but still working on finishing some stuff up so cannot hand all of it to you today.*
- I’m concerned for the students who are assigned to a worse school.
 - *We analyzed academic performance using MGP, but we will also be looking at DC CAS test scores as another measure of academic performance.*
- *Keep in mind that DCPS has some relatively diverse schools, so where the data indicates that students have been assigned to a comparable school, that does not necessarily mean that it is entirely segregated. The change is 0.2 for racial or ethnic diversity over all.*
- So the percentage of students who walk farther under the proposed boundaries in Ward 3 is 40%, but how many students is that?
 - *There are so many tables and charts that we need to keep a sense of proportion. Percentage as opposed to the number can be important, and 40% only translates to 96 students. We will have the tables with the numbers available tomorrow. I’m troubled too by the mode of transportation in terms of measuring impact from a walkability standpoint.*
- If all those students actually went to DCPS would they fit?
 - *That’s figured into the analysis and we considered boundary participation rates, so we know where the city is at risk if charters close or charter participation drops.*
- I need to see the list of guiding values again; how are we supposed to be relating to all those values to the proposal? I worked hard on the choice-sets idea and it is clear how un-popular an idea that was.
- This sweeps a bunch of things off the table. I want the values vetted again too. This proposal does not excite me. It should not be based on “the less change the better”.

- What problems do we want to solve and at what level?
 - *The values were (in no order):*
 - *Equitable access to high quality schools: We believe families have the right to a good education independent of economic or geographic circumstances.*
 - *Parental choice: We believe families should have the ability to access public schools outside of designated school assigned by residence.*
 - *Predictability: We believe it is important to provide a path of right to families beyond elementary school.*
 - *Neighborhood schools: We believe it is important to support the connections between communities and their schools.*
- Did we agree the values were solid? I want to make sure the values were unassailable. Some of the values are clearly at odds with each other.
- Equitable access to good schools in your neighborhood - - or an equal shot at the lottery are two very different things.
- Predictability and neighborhood schools have a very high value and this plan reflects that. But there was a woman at Coolidge who spoke passionately for her right to those out-of-boundary seats. We were guided by data and our values but this plan meets someplace in the middle.

Preliminary Proposal and Impact Analysis: Early Childhood

With this preliminary outline of the Advisory Committee's recommendation the Committee is exactly right – you need to touch back with the values and understand how they have been woven in. The values laid out were not an insignificant policy statement in themselves.

The proposal is to:

- Provide PK3 access by right to neighborhood DCPS schools, for boundaries with high at-risk populations
 - *Threshold not yet defined, but likely between 40-70%*
- Provide PK4 access by right to neighborhood DCPS schools
- Key Rationale
 - *Increases predictability for families*
 - *Strengthens family connections to neighborhood schools*
 - *Helps stabilize enrollment for DCPS*

Members Comments and Questions on Preliminary Proposal: Early Childhood

- How does PK3 by right compare to the current environment?
 - *PK3 as discussed would be by-right just as Kindergarten is by-right now; you would have an absolute right to a seat in your neighborhood school if*

your school/boundary met the income criteria and would not have to apply for a seat using the Common Lottery.

- When do most families enter the system? But you still have the option of entering a lottery for PK3 and so would be able to stay in that feeder system. How does that support neighborhood schools?
 - *It just gives you the right to attend your neighborhood school if you prefer.*
- You are not obligated to have a seat at PK3 and you may not be able to find a PK3 seat if your school/boundary is not deemed ‘at-risk’.
- Is there room in DCPS for guaranteed PK4 for all elementary schools? Would in-boundary demand be forecast on the basis of wait-lists in the lottery?
 - *If PS-8th grade schools became elementary schools then the capacity problem is much less of an issue. We need to work with DCPS to determine these details.*
- My recommendation would be to let Title 1 schools be those with the right for PK3 and PK4. That would take the space pressure off the Ward 3 schools with capacity problems. The determination for access to PK3 should follow the school and its boundary – not the individual family.
 - *The DME explained that Title 1 sets a higher bar. One complication to consider is that we want to follow a school-wide Head-Start model which can only be done at Title 1 schools. If a school’s student population changes with gentrification and it changes from a Title I school, then the children don’t get the Head-Start services, even though a large number of children needing those services still attend the school. This is far into details but shows how important it is to get the threshold right.*
- My children’s school is 93% high poverty because the many middle-class neighbors send their children elsewhere. I’m concerned that those students who are not at risk would not have a PK4 spot available. I would have a right to PK3 and PK4 at my neighborhood school just as my children now have a right to free lunch. I’m concerned because other near-by schools lost their Title 1 status and now have lost their funding for after-school programs which many children desperately need.
 - *That’s why the idea is that it is the school that qualifies for PK3 or PK4 – not the individual families. Or should this eligibility be based on the level of income of people living in the boundary rather than the income of the families enrolled at the school?*

- Which would give the school the largest number of students? We should frame it in the most inclusive way as possible. The PK4 rights are described as being based on the number of classroom seats available at the school.
- Early childhood classrooms are capped at 15-18 three-year-olds.
 - *There is a caveat proposed in the details that requires that early childhood enrollment have a cut-off date in October or November. Otherwise the concern is that with PK by right, parents would tend to drop in with children at any time during the school year which would make staffing very difficult.*
- Truancy rates are high with PK3 and PK4.

Preliminary Proposal and Impact Analysis: Out-of-Boundary

Set asides for out-of-boundary placement would be simplified with:

Not less than 10% set-aside for elementary school

Not less than 15% set-aside for middle school

Not less than 20% set-aside for high school

The only preference would be for siblings. A right for out-of-boundary students to attend schools through the geographic feeder pattern of their out-of-boundary school would be preserved.

There was concern that set-aside proposals for people from lower performing schools, pave an exit ramp for any schools termed “low-performing”. Consequently, the low-income school qualifier was taken out of the policy proposal and only the sibling preference remains. Similarly, we heard that the proximity preference was also problematic for people who live long distances from high quality schools. People stated that a lottery should be a lottery.

The impact analysis is on current boundaries. Currently only Janney and Hendley are not meeting the 10% out-of-boundary threshold because of high in-boundary demand. Seven middle schools are currently close to the 15% out-of-boundary threshold, but only Kelly Miller is currently not meeting the threshold because of high in-boundary demand. The only high school not meeting the 20% set-aside is Ballou. However, if boundary participation rates stay the same and the population projections hold true, then by 2020 there may be as many as 20 elementary schools that cannot meet the 10% threshold.

Members Comments and Questions on Preliminary Proposal: Out-of-Boundary

- If neighborhood elementary schools are to be the recommendation, then these out-of-boundary set-asides are the only access available to quality if families are in-boundary for a low-performing school. Why have the set-asides been set at only 10% for elementary school?

- However, over 40% of the students are attending charters which have no boundaries at all.
- But many of the charters are not much better than the lowest performing DCPS schools so we need an equity piece that will improve student outcomes - - otherwise we are re-creating the same system that we already have.
- The other strong comment from the community was that school quality and set-asides do not go far enough to address quality. There is a duty on the part of DCPS to provide quality in neighborhood schools.
- This is tricky. The holy grail of school quality takes time. I agree with much that has been said about the Committee reaching to get to diversity and quality into the proposals. From a practical standpoint (and from neither a DCPS nor charter perspective) I am concerned about perpetuating the same old patterns. But I'm troubled with the strong Ward 3 gravitation toward valuing neighborhood schools and what that might do to requiring charter schools to function more like neighborhood schools.
- I'm not agnostic. I don't want families to stampede toward Ward 3, but these families go there since they want high quality PS-12 schools. I want to support neighborhood schools, choice and reform. We have to talk about trying to solve segregation. But a 10%, 15% and 20% set-aside is just crumbs from somebody's table that won't go far to creating the middle-class dream. Gentrification is adding diversity but if we cannot capture and hold on to that diversity we have lost an opportunity. What about those areas where socio-economics haven't changed? This keeps coming up and we can't put it to rest.
- Set-asides don't generate diversity. Amidon is in the Wilson boundary and there is real concern on the part of the low-income neighbors there who do not want to lose Wilson for Eastern.
- Whatever recommendation this committee comes to we should re-visit it in a certain amount of time: two years, or possibly every five years. We have this conversation backwards because we can't make decisions about where we want the structure of our school system to go - - DCPS AND charter - - but still we are trying to move boundaries around to try to better serve our children. Further, we can't tackle the programming aspect of the problem. Nevertheless, we should put forth recommendations to create more quality. The Choice Sets Option provided for specialty programming at one-third of our elementary schools all across the city. We have so much information to weigh and sometimes people vote against what is in their best interests. People have not determined where they stand on these issues as yet. This front-end conversation does not include

where we want the District's school system to go. Just the values don't get to that.

- The issues are very complex; the feedback is wonderful. When I look at the feeders into Wilson my heart is broken because it is becoming totally segregated. But how do you make sure people who invested in their neighborhoods get the value that they worked for? The pyramid of elementary to middle to high school seems too simplistic. I have hopes for Eastern because of the neighborhood investments in those schools. We need to find a new paradigm; it takes imagination and creativity. Maybe work by blocks, neighborhoods and schools.
- Taking Bancroft and Shepherd out of Wilson's feeder makes the re-segregation worse.
- But Wilson can't hold one-third of the city.
- I agree that diversity is important but it is possible only in certain areas. I would personally prefer a less diverse school that can compete in quality. I hope we can do some simple things that improve quality - - which is defined differently by different people. Is it test scores or programming? How do we make sure parents get what they want: libraries, art rooms, music programs, physical education, and so forth? And I don't know we can do that without coordinating with the charters.
- We can't have unrealistic expectations for this process, but we also would not want to miss the opportunity. We could hit the target or not. We have created a moment where public education is the topic of conversation in the city. In this discussion a lot more than education is coming to the surface. We owe it to those who have participated to bring those messages forward and be mindful of the process. It pains me to hear candidates state that they may dismiss this process. I wish we had started two years ago. We are in a unique position. We have more of a finger on the pulse of education in the city than any other set of people right now. I personally feel a responsibility around that. It is not about schools only - it is about public services to every block in the city. Quality schools are a hugely important part of this. Short of bussing I don't know how to address inequality. We want to deliver a set of recommendation that we own but I feel responsibility to the current families as well as a responsibility to really provide equitable access to high quality schools. It breaks my heart to see we are preserving the status quo, but what do we do reasonably to change it? I worry about the time line; we need to provide a quality recommendation quickly that won't add to any conspiracy theories.

- With respect to increased access to quality there are three areas that would help in the near term. First is the integration of charters into the neighborhood system. The second is providing transportation access for the near term. The third is grandfathering, which comes up a lot. This opens up the possibility to explore other areas.
- Public charters are public but they can't be a solution. You can't co-opt the charters - - and I say that as a believer in strong neighborhood schools. Ten percent does not provide enough choice and taking that charter option out of choice does not help. I'd be happy to discuss this further.
- There is a lot going on in the District to address these problems besides this Committee. Planning and Economic Development for instance can address some of these problems with inclusionary zoning, and other programs. The Committee could refer to these other agency efforts in their recommendation as well. The city should support this effort through the next two or five years.
- I'm spinning with all this. No matter what is decided, there are members who may not in the end agree; and some people may be unhappy. This process requires a faith in the future and faith in the other agencies. There aren't easy answers to all of this, but the conversation cannot just stay here. This is one of the most far-reaching processes the city has set in motion. With work, it should get us to where we need to be.
- Diversity is very important to me. Public discourse is loud and super complex. But it is important not to squander the level of engagement of the Committee and the professional staff. We are charged with doing boundaries, not focusing on quality as this process does not allow engagement on the quality issue. However, the definition of quality matters: we have "good" schools on one end of the spectrum and "bad" schools on the other and lots more in the middle. People want to choose predictability and quality. It is our central responsibility to ease the transportation problems that are an impediment to reaching quality. There are many practical implications to making lack-luster recommendations. Where do programming recommendations go? I'm looking at a minority voice. I like data, but you can't get too caught up on the data and remember the foundation of core principles established.
- I'm in the weeds of this work, 24 hours a day. It's hard work. What we are wrestling with now is what people in the community meetings intended. One difficult point is how to support improving the city as a whole without going in a direction that may make us uncomfortable. Another is finding the balance of out-of-the-box thinking with the necessities of familiar day-to-day existence.

- This may be a historic process. With the diversity and choice in DC there is no other district in American that has quite faced this. It is sometimes frustrating, and I come out of these meetings with even more questions. We've all got a lot invested both personally and professionally. Diversity is really important to me. It's the choice issue that it seems more difficult to make sense of. People have so many choices and we can't control that they will believe in neighborhood schools. I am not happy with the media coverage, if we have any hope for implementation. If people knew that city-wide lottery was off the table it would really help.
- I don't think this is a status quo recommendation. In the District we have more charters than almost anywhere else. An idea that would pull back from that is radical, not status quo. We expanded choice enormously but we have not really invested in neighborhood schools and we have not invested in the high school programs. I would caution characterizing this proposal as a status quo statement. Being bold should not be how we measure a good proposal. Our measure should be "did we solve some of our problems?" I value neighborhoods because I see neighborhoods changing with a lot more diversity. How to capture this growing diversity is a challenge. If we truly invested in our neighborhood schools we could radically change our city for the better. [We need the charters;] DCPS does not need to rationalize or copy the charters. We do not have predictability or a rational system now. When there are communities that invest, they define their schools as quality because then those schools become *their* schools.
- The time line is really important.
- What we've heard from a lot of people is that they want a matter-of-right path. There are other options to get at the quality issue. One is to make sure those by-right schools are quality. We can propose to locate specialty programs all over the city - - we have not invested in them all as we should. We have a very limited time for this preliminary recommendation. We have to soon agree on an all-over vision. If it does not reflect what we've heard . . .
- We've heard about the need for an application middle school east of the river.
- I agree with much of what has been said about the need to present this as a process - - not an end statement. We could propose to monitor effects for a year, a three year, or every five years as a continuing process. We can be frank about how difficult this is and acknowledge the challenges to the city. I also agree that we need to describe an emerging vision of the system we want to get to. I disagree that things are getting worse with respect to being able to get to diverse schools. If you look at a map we have three areas where good high

schools could reflect a diverse population: Wilson, Eastern and Coolidge/Roosevelt/Cardozo/Dunbar. But what are we going to do in east of Washington? Maybe roll up our sleeves and look at neighborhood demographics to increase diversity. I agree that choice sets [are not feasible]; we were trying to get choice sets to be the hybrid option. We need good press outreach. It is disturbing to have the process be dismissed so summarily by the candidates.

- This Committee was constituted with all the city's education agencies at the table. I'm in an awkward position as both a community member and also an agency representative on the Committee. I've often felt I had to remain silent because of that straddle. I've often removed myself because I wanted to take care. But conversations are happening within the agency and the work of the Committee informs them. This will take time but there is a level of investment at the agency level and there is incredible value in the impact on what is going on at the agency. But we have to manage expectations with this engagement.

Abigail Smith remarked on the incredible amount of written material and the huge responsibility that Advisory Members have. . She viewed the "messiness" in wrestling with ideas at this stage as the right spot for the Committee to be in. Each member is putting themselves in a place where they are owners of the solution - - each putting a stake in the ground. She said she could only ask that the Committee try their best o parse these problems - - really have an internal conversation. However she made one request. Up until now we've said that you absolutely may share the work of the Committee. But in the next few weeks we all need to be exercise a high degree of sensitivity. If you have concerns, please reach out to this office for advice. Using a quotation about the work of Civil Rights leader, Abigail Smith remarked that this work is going to "make you tired, tired, tired but that's why we have to be brave, brave, brave."

Next Steps

Please provide comments to the Draft Outline for the Committee Proposal to the Technical Team on line in track changes. Include what **you** are looking for. The language really matters and we will need everyone's help on that.

Attending

Chairperson

- Abigail Smith, Deputy Mayor for Education

Community Representatives

- Maryam Ahranjani, Marshall Brennan Project, American University
- Wilma Bonner, Howard University, Retired DCPS principal and Assistant Superintendent
- Matt Frumin, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner 3E (ANC), DCPS parent

- Heather Harding, The Education Consortium for Research and Evaluation (EdCORE), PCS parent
- Faith Hubbard, Ward 5 Council on Education
- Ellen McCarthy, Acting Director, DC Office of Planning
- Cathy Reilly, Senior High Alliance of Parents Principals and Educators (SHAPPE)
- Evelyn Boyd Simmons, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner 2F (ANC) Ed Committee; DCPS parent
- Eboni-Rose Thompson, Save the Children Organization; Ward 7 Education Council
- Marta Urquilla, America Achieves/Results for America; PCS parent
- Martin Welles, Labor and Employment Attorney; Amidon-Bowen PTA; DCPS parent

District Representatives

- Josephine Bias-Robinson, DCPS Chief of Family & Public Engagement
- Shanita Burney, DCPS Office of Family & Public Engagement
- Christopher Delfs, Sr. Citywide Planner, DC Office of Planning;
- Iris Bond Gill, Dir. Grants Management & Compliance, OSSE
- Clara Hess, Director, Human Capital and Strategic Initiatives, PCSB

Technical Team

- Michael Aiken, Reingold LINK Communications
- Alex Donahue, 21st Century School Fund
- Mary Filardo, 21st Century School Fund
- Nancy Huvendick, 21st Century School Fund
- Cecilia Kaltz, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education
- Claudia Lujan, Office of Deputy Mayor for Education
- Austin Nichols, Urban Institute, Senior Research Associate
- Sheena Pagarido, Reingold LINK Communications

Staff Members

- Judi Greenberg, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education
- Esa Syeed, Doctoral Student, NYU Steinhardt School, (Technical Team support)

Not Attending

Community Representatives

- Ed Davies, Children Youth Investment Trust Corporation
- Denise Forte, Leadership for Educational Equity, DCPS parent Ward 6
- Rev Donald Isaac, East of the River Clergy, Police, Community Partnership and Chair of Interfaith Council
- Kamili Kiros, Achievement Prep Board of Trustees; PCS parent
- Sharona Robinson Ward 8 Education Council; Ballou, Jefferson, Randle Highlands PTAs; MySchool DC Parent Advisory Council

District Representatives

- Emily Bloomfield, Member, Public Charter School Board
- Ariana Quinones, Chief of Staff, Office Deputy Mayor for HHS