

Opening, Closing, Siting (OCS) Working Group: Meeting #8

Date & Time: July 17, 2017 10:30-11:30am

Location: Conference call line

Attendees:

- Caryn Ernst | Watkins ES, Stuart-Hobson MS parent; former PTA president, Capitol Hill Cluster School; member, Capitol Hill Public School Parent Organization (CHPSPO)
- Melissa Kim | Chief Academic Officer, Secondary Schools, KIPP DC; former principal, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Mary Levy | Independent education analyst, former Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, Parent of DCPS alumnae
- Bethany Little | Murch ES, BASIS PCS parent; Education policy expert
- Claudia Luján | School Turnaround and Performance Division, Office of the Chief of Schools, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Scott Pearson | Executive Director, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)
- Shantelle Wright | Founder & CEO, Achievement Prep PCS; Chair, DC Association of Public Charter Schools

Call Summary:

- Facilitator walked through the slide deck.
- Facilitator: Slides 5-6 demonstrate the possible grainsize of the Task Force's recommendations and what the final report could look like. The idea is to start with a loftier strategy or commitment and then list key recommendations under that strategy. Beneath those recommendations would be implementation tactics and policy considerations. These would be parameters, as the Task Force can't spend all of its time getting into specifics.
 - Comment: The format is fine, but I want to make sure that before it goes out officially, we get a chance to review and change it. It looks different than it did during our conversations last fall.
 - Facilitator: This is just an example; the Task Force would look at it.
- Facilitator: (Slide 11)We left off last time with people wanting to start the conversation about what should be included in the SCA. What are our thoughts and reactions to this list of categories?
 - Comment: Past student demand should not be included because it is based on MySchoolDC lottery data and that is skewed to only look at citywide schools.
- Facilitator: These are just buckets of metrics; for each bucket, there are different pieces of the puzzle to help understand demand. MSDC data would just be one piece. We would need to include information about where kids are enrolling as well because that's a measure of demand. We will also need measures of where kids might want to go to school because this could be another window into demand. We've been starting to adopt live-go analysis from Denver. As of right now, we aren't allowed to use MSDC demand in this public way.
- Comment: This raises the question that popped up in the debate about ESSA's definition of quality; how will we weight different factors?
- Comment: This is not attempting to come up with a single answer about demand, which would then raise the weight question. Rather, the SCA provides different cuts at the data to determine where there is need or where there is not need.

- Facilitator: We are not looking to the SCA to say “Here’s the definitive picture of what the data is saying”. At the same time, we want the SCA to be meaningful and not just subject to anyone’s individual interpretation. We want to show what would be most helpful when trying to put a picture together of what the city needs.
- Comment: I see it as snapshots: we have to include different data ideas. We are not doing anything by weights but we are saying that based on data-points, these are the takeaways or trends we see. We would do some analysis but we would not do any analysis to get to some sort of weighted system.
- Facilitator: This is a good distinction to make. There wouldn’t be a demand weighting system because we are not trying to get to one rating system.
- Comment: However, by using the MSDC data, you would be using a data-point that is automatically skewed. The lottery is designed to have applicants rank schools that are out-of-boundary or citywide, so it will automatically make some schools look like they are in higher demand. We need to recognize that it is skewed. Enrollment rate is also another skewed data-point. If we assume some schools are going to be fully or less than fully enrolled, we have to make sure we’ve built that into the SCA and make sure that enrollment rate isn’t used as a metric to judge schools. We are making a leap saying that because there is a longer waitlist or because a school is more highly enrolled, it is higher quality or lower quality.
- Comment: One way to start to fix this is to not call it demand. We should use a less loaded term as a way to include the data and not automatically associate those two things with demand (waitlists/MSDC data and enrollment data)
- Facilitator: Slide 15 provides more detail. A lot of the information is captured in different ways already.
- Comment: For at-risk students, people want that data differentiated more. It should be broken out in terms of their different levels of need. A student who is dealing with homelessness has different needs than students who are under-credited, etc.
- Comment: I am struggling with the idea of looking at schools on neighborhood levels. We should think about the relevant geographic area for each particular school, given where it draws its students from.
- Comment: Neighborhood-level analysis right now looks at students where they live. Most of the citywide schools are charter schools, although some serve mostly kids from nearby the schools.
- Facilitator: We are trying to get away from focusing on boundary because not all schools have boundaries. We can look within a certain radius of a school and change the distance depending on the grade composition of the schools. We could start thinking about where schools are drawing their students, which is one way to address the neighborhood-level analysis.
- Comment: And there may be schools or areas where the area from which the school is drawing students is the whole city as opposed to the area right around the school.
- Comment: It would be helpful to know more than in-boundary and out-of-boundary enrollment rates for schools, but we also need to include boundaries as well because they are still significant. The boundaries are important levers that affect student assignment. I would also like to see if there are any trends or organic feeder patterns emerging.
- Facilitator: We are hoping this analysis can show information at the neighborhood level of where and how far kids are traveling. Looking at the data so far, we can see that it’s easier to get around if you’re in the middle of the city. There are most likely other patterns we will be able to see.
- Comment: On slide 17, under gap analysis bullet: Denver had as part of its SRA goals several different gap analyses. I am curious about why we only have one potential gap analysis listed on the slide right now.

- Facilitator: We've looked at a gap analysis for how many seats we will have or need (our capacity) if we don't change the number of overall seats; which other gap analyses do we need?
- Comment: What are the other gap analysis metrics in Denver?
 - Comment: I believe they look at gaps in capacity, performance, match rates, and pathways. Are there more we want to think about?
- Comment: One example: there are significant choices in the type of schools at certain grade compositions and the number of choices decreases as kids get older. We could include data about the degree of choice in certain areas of the city.
- Comment: I am struck by the movement of kids in slide 16 and just how many are traveling and how far they are going. There should be an analysis of the time it takes to travel to school and how easy or difficult it is for parents to figure out routes to school.
- Comment: We should look at transportation. It's a hub-and-spoke system here and its goal is to move people from the outside of the city in.
 - Comment: That kind of travel takes away students' opportunities to participate in out-of-school-time activities. This kind of distance travel causes a social engagement gap so maybe we should look at that as well.
- Facilitator: We could use time on public transportation. For that, we tend to use walk distance at the moment. We are exploring how to use the Kids Ride Free data but right now, the numbers are relatively low compared to our total population.
- Comment: I'd like to suggest another bucket: I don't see anything about the programs and the resources that schools have to offer. We should include whether or not schools offer foreign language and what the pupil to adult ratio is. These are important numbers for parents.
- Comment: Resources and equity information would be important as well.
- Facilitator: It is important to note that there are going to be different resources for different purposes. The SCA is a source of information around the siting and opening of schools, rather than a source of information for parents to use to figure out where to send their kids. Other entities are working on platforms to address that information.
- Comment: These are a lot of inputs for the SCA, but what are the outputs?
- Comment: Should the SCA include an analysis of the diversity of the school? That's a key choice factor for them and families will travel to access that.
 - Facilitator: We are hoping to do more analysis around student demographics and look at race and ethnicity by where kids live to see how reflective schools are of diversity in the city and area around the school.
- Comment: I was assuming that the demographic bucket is by school, is it not?
 - Facilitator: We typically do the analysis by neighborhood but we could also do one by school.
- Comment: We should come up with a unified capacity measure. We should utilize a same capacity measure for all early-childhood student, etc.
- Comment: There are some basic facilities that all schools should have; gyms, etc. Is this information going to be in the MFP? It would be useful to know what the MFP is focused on so we can know what is already being taken care of in other places/information sources and what we should be taking on in our working group.
- Facilitator: Are there any other holes in trying to understand what is available for analysis in the SCA?
- Comment: It is important for us to go back to the broader community and give them an opportunity to comment on what might be missing from the SCA.