

Opening, Closing, Siting (OCS) Working Group: Meeting #6

Date & Time: June 19, 2017 2:00-3:00pm

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)
- Irene Holtzman | Executive Director, Friends of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS)
- Mary Levy | Independent education analyst, former Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, Parent of DCPS alumnae
- Claudia Luján | School Turnaround and Performance Division, Office of the Chief of Schools, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Sarah Parker, Office of Family and Public Engagement, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Scott Pearson | Executive Director, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)

Call Summary:

Guest Speaker: Brian Eschbacher, Denver Public Schools

- Capacity and utilization
 - How is capacity measured?
 - Denver struggled with how to look at capacity for a number of reasons, not least being that services have evolved over time and our buildings largely have not.
 - We look at a range – with a low end, where the numbers are not sustainable; and a high end, closer to the limit of being able to meet demand.
 - Target for utilization?
 - Rough number is 20% empty (80% utilized); this means that high-performing schools will generally be full and lower-performing schools will be less full. Question then is what to do with under-enrolled, low-performing schools.
 - This is measured within a region or zone to focus attention more locally.
- How is quality defined?
 - School Performance Framework (SPF) is largely based on test scores, with a 3-to-2 ratio of growth-to-proficiency; the SPF also looks at subgroup performance, attendance, behavior, parent satisfaction, and other categories.
 - All factors are rolled up into one summative score, rated on a color scale.
- School closures
 - Are schools that have been closed recently more likely to have served high-need students?
 - Yes.
 - What happens with staff?
 - They do not remain in the school. Depending on nature of contract, they get priority for reassignment.
 - What happens with students in a hard closure (i.e., not a restart)?
 - They have priority in the choice/lottery process in moving to other schools.
- Zones

- How large are the zones?
 - Tend to be between 2-4 square miles.
- Zones have multiple schools, with district and charter schools having same enrollment policies.
- Individual student who used to have one by-right school now has a right to attend one of several schools in a zone, but loses the right to attend any one school in particular.
- Increased transportation for zone choices, especially to ensure that low-income families have same access to schools that are farther away.
- Planning process
 - Takes 24 months: SPF (September) → Announcement of school closures (September/October) → SRA (November) → Call for Quality Schools (January) → Program approvals (May and June) → Choice (lottery)
 - Call for quality schools (CFQS)
 - Interprets information presented in SRA, “calls” for schools based on need identified in SRA
 - Charter and district submit proposals for new schools
 - District now has infrastructure in place to allow it to propose new/replicated schools
 - Community engagement
 - Community gets final say in determining new schools/programs through CFQS – Denver Public Schools provides list of finalists, and community makes decision
 - Facilities
 - Charters generally get district-owned buildings through takeover/restart process
 - Closed facilities feed back into SRA
- Enrollment
 - Schools backfill throughout year
 - Waitlist is closed after October, allowing for mobile/harder-to-serve students to be placed in in-demand schools (at least in middle school?)
 - Mid-year mobility managed through two centers, no direct registration at schools