Attendees:
- Shanita Burney
- Caryn Ernst
- Melissa Kim
- Mary Levy
- Claudia Lujan
- Jennie Niles
- Scott Pearson
- Antwan Wilson
- Shantelle Wright
- Bethany Little
- Jennifer Niles

Discussion:

Jenn Comey went over goals for today's meeting and recapped last meeting.

Task Force: Can we step back a little? Since the last meeting, these circles (Slide 10) got filled in. We discussed them on the phone, but not everyone was on. It doesn't reflect anything I said. Reading up about Denver, it's a unitary system, quite different from what we have. Coordination happens at the School Board level, and we don't have [a School Board]. I'm not sure how relevant Denver is to us, so we can pick and choose. This is not a scheme for collaboration, it's a scheme for making more and more 4 and 5 star schools. This process may entail replacement of schools because Denver is very strong with restart schools. I have trouble signing off on that.

Facilitator: Denver is different, but there are things we can borrow and adapt.

Task Force: When we started, we didn't have the common lottery. It was silly we were all trying to do multiple applications, so we said we can streamline applications for parents. It would be helpful to make a strawman timeline: what are the engagements, can we map them annually? We could see what portions of the year parents should be engaged, and see an18 month runway to open a new school. We know those things. I wonder if coming up with that timeline where we can come together around community engagement, we could start reacting to that. So much of what Denver, New Orleans, Detroit is not us, but cities are trying to come up with this idea to give kids choice, strike the right balance, and support communities. How do we make sure nothing important about a kids' life doesn't happen in a black box but we are bringing people along? How can we all say to put kids' experience first?

Task Force: We have three things common citywide: application process, common school quality framework, Citywide Strategic Analysis. The two other ones aren't common but they could be coordinated: call for quality schools is done independently by each sector, but we should have conversations. The following step is approvals, which is done separately by sector

but could be done at the same time of the year so we understand what each arm is doing. We don't need to be identical to Denver but we should think through the parts that are common. When we diverge, we should be doing it in the same timeframe so we could have conversations and share information.

Task Force: I envision two parallel lines with clear places where they touch. If it's a conversation or something more, that's something we need to figure out. Having a clear timeline for both sectors and information that informs that would be way beyond where we currently are. It would be useful for advocacy groups and parents to figure out how to enter the conversation.

Task Force: I'm with you on transparency, access to information and process. Aside from that, there are fundamental differences in governance structures, and it's hard to know what we're talking about. Like, opening and sitings are happening only with PCSB. To talk about coordination, what are we talking about if one sector isn't really doing opening and siting? If PCSB is opening and siting schools, what are we coordinating? For quality, the ESSA Star Rating is similar, but it's fundamentally different in using the ESSA Star Rating to close schools in each sector.

Task Force: I was not talking about closures in what I just said. Chancellor, could you talk about what it would look like for DCPS?

Task Force: I don't want to get ahead of my working group – there are groups at DCPS that are figuring this out. But I do want to say, that we will not stay in the business of not having a process for improving our schools. We have too many schools where students are scoring 1 on PARCC. We have to put work around structures to improve schools, and for me it's a little different than other folks. I know how I feel about churn in neighborhoods. For a new operator and new program year over year, we do not intend to do that. We intend to have a process that's clear and transparent for how to improve schools, with some rhythm to it. We need them to be resourced to succeed.

     In DC, we don't have a model to address schools that are struggling. The school improvement process doesn't work for all schools. We need to accelerate because kids will be in and out before it improves. We will allow the DCPS work group to launch and then we can discuss in more detail.

Task Force: OK, that is helpful. I want to repeat back what you said: DCPS will use the ESSA Star Rating for school closures and call for new schools? They could be charters, or DCPS leaders ready to start new schools?

Task Force: That is not what I said. I said I wouldn't get into specifics here. We will have a process. I want to leave it at that until we're ready to communicate. We are not going to use just a traditional school improvement model because it's too slow.

Task Force: I like what was said about understanding the timelines attached to this process and the touchpoints. It would be another level of depth and add meaning. The point you're making, I've struggled with – this isn't about decision-making for OCS but informing the process – the

process continues to live within each sector. We're better off acknowledging that. It's not changing, but we're informing it, making it a better, transparent process. That is a win.

> There are questions about OCS we haven't put on the table and answered. It's unsatisfactory to pretend we've addressed those things by creating data transparency. Data transparency is important foundational work, but it is just foundation. We have to decide if there's something we want to say about those things as a body.

Task Force: We haven't talked about each circle with any depth, we're all assuming from where we're coming from. We need to do that together. What do we mean in each sector? Where can the process build coordination? The process is not listed, so what would we want to happen in each circle?

Task Force: There is not a dimension of differentiation for each sector. We each approach that work differently and think about differently. There is a lot unsaid – if we assume everyone's doing the same thing, that causes anxiety.

Task Force: The use of ESSA is so test-based. If we're opening, closing and siting, where do schools' test scores fit into that? There's a correlation between test scores and the percentage of at-risk students and a correlation with special education students. People I talk to are concerned about continuing churn as we have. The school system has been through lots of churn in the last ten years. We haven't gotten much bang for our buck out of it. I would like to know we're getting past it to something more promising. I'm disturbed about the notion of knowing our kids in schools where programs come and go, they don't have stability anyway. I want more stability and working with what we have.

Task Force: That really helps because looking at this doesn't tell me the only way to open and close schools is based on a common quality framework. To me, this didn't dictate what each sector would use, it's just creating an apples to apples comparison. ESSA ratings aren't determining opening and closing but will help us look across sectors.

Task Force: There are many other factors we could look at in terms of school quality.

Task Force: I thought we agreed to look at a number of measures of school quality in the Citywide Strategic Analysis – we agreed on a big list of things.

Facilitator: We had demographics.

Task Force: We talked about the OSSE report cards too.

Task Force: The Citywide Strategic Analysis should be a rich analysis, looking at multiple factors, and we don't want to lose that. These circles aren't doing us justice, there's lots below surface of each one. We need to show the timeline, the entry to community engagement. This doesn't show nuance to the work.

Task Force: I don't feel like we end each discussion on clear agreements. I'm not quite sure if anything was agreed on. The point you're making is a good one, it's not clear what's underneath all this.

Task Force: To speak to agenda, community engagement wasn't assuming this is set in stone. We were just taking another slice, thinking about community engagement to lay out the plan. We should plan to come back and talk more about it.

Task Force: Did we look at how schools are resourced… closing a school with a lot of low income kids that hasn't been resourced?

Task Force: We discussed budget, per-student funding.

Task Force: When you're judging how schools are working, you have to look at many factors.

Task Force: I'm thinking about what's up for us to discuss vs. what is not. There are things that each sector will have to do. Think about the power of this group – I did not think this group would decide how DCPS would divide money and budget, that's a little too granular. Constant churn for communities – we have datasets that say we don't want to do that. Our job is different with serving low income students and we haven't figured it out. How do we capture the spirit of what you want?

Task Force: The Task Force should come back with what's behind this, what have we agreed on?

Task Force: We can't dictate from this group to the Chancellor. There is a percentage of funds to budget for each school. Is that the end goal?

Task Force: The point was can we see the list of data points going into school quality framework? To your point of influence, when we talk about community engagement, what is it for?

Facilitator: We are figuring it out as we're going. It's certainly been abstract, but we can talk about it at a high level, there are a number of things we can flesh out. I heard you say the goals of community engagement are to ensure transparency and clarity, there are no surprises, and get feedback and communicate throughout the cycle.

Task Force: It should allow for entryways for conversations, where are people engaged? Is there something that happens and gives something a green light from community? Something that shuts down a process?

Task Force: Is it informing, influencing, or engagement opportunities? We need to be clear about when engagement is what.

Task Force: I'm curious what people think is an appropriate role for community input to influence these decisions.

Task Force: The best schools are informed by communities. You keep bringing it back and ask, is this what you meant? The time it takes to involve folks is tough. Timeframe is important, knowing when to stop and how much time is reasonable, because you can't take input forever. Need to take action based on input and analysis. How many meaningful touchpoints are enough? We need to give schools and school systems some guidance.

Facilitator: Community members can all feel differently – how does that get incorporated? So they understand from a transparency standpoint why decision was made.

Task Force: We're talking about different communities, but we're talking about opening, closing, and siting. They are very different strategies and communities. For closing decisions, we engage the community of the school that might be closed. Opening is totally different. There are different levels of influence communities could have on those decisions. People should know what they're actually able to influence. There should be no misunderstandings.

Task Force: I'm having trouble understanding our decision or recommendation point. We should make a recommendation about the potential for community engagement in any one of these circles, but it's hard because we don't know what's in the circle. We're struggling to be productive. We can talk in abstract about it, but the Citywide Strategic Analysis is already done, the common application and quality school framework are already figured out. For the CSA, we need engagement on what the elements are. When you put it out, you need community engagement to wrestle with what's been produced.

Facilitator: It's helpful to say engagement is all the way around

Task Force: The first two are done. The third bubble, the coordinated call, it's critical to understand the decision around frameworks. Once schools and programs are involved, before final decision, there needs to be community engagement before and after it's final. Folks need to face the community and say this is what's decided.

Task Force: Here's where it gets confusing because PCSB is setting up citywide schools and DCPS, it would be a specific location, right?

Task Force. We haven't decided yet. We're going to try to answer the question, for the city. We're going to try to create schools that are intentionally diverse by design. Sometimes we need to improve the school. We need 15-18 months to do this well. The school could be new, and I'm interested in collaborations, if works for community. Rather than get tied down by specific language, let's focus more on what we want to see. I don't see us doing hard closures. We are in a different place than just five years ago. For me, coordinated is less around one process and more around making decisions on new programs or schools in the same time period. It makes a lot of sense because district and charters are deciding based on their sectors vs. what makes sense for the city. It's a disconnected opportunity for families and hard to make sense of.
> We're not trying to control the charter sector or say DCPS has to do it a particular way. Charters will do what they do, but we're asking them to think about what meaningful engagement looks like, with enough time to know what's going on. DCPS will need to explain the process. There's terminology here, I'm not saying we'll call it that, but I'm

not concerned with how it's written here. Citywide strategic analysis – we'll have a strategic regional analysis.

We need to think about all schools having thoughtful connection, where it makes sense to collaborate with charters. Families don't understand what we're trying to suggest in moving across the district, and we need a perspective on that.

We need to solve for the missing opportunities suburban schools have like postsecondary education, beginning programs while in high school. We don't have a strong hub allowing students to do that. I'm not ok with that being true.

Task Force: Are there different community engagement processes when you're talking about a geographically focused school vs broader question about special program, citywide? There are two different types of processes in similar amount of time.

Task Force: We would have different strategies, that's great to point out. This is overview of citywide school planning, rather than how to open, close, and site schools. At the 30,000 foot level – do we roughly have the things we want? We can talk about detail within each.

Task Force: What if we say the assumptions and expectations of the recommendation is that community engagement is a value and a process that permeates all of this. We have expectations for community, engagement: specific to question at hand, multiple touchpoints before and after decisions are made, etc.

Task Force: I was thinking the same thing.

Task Force: Is engagement for input, for approval? What is engagement for? Inform?

Task Force: I recommend we brainstorm some of the things here, so people have something to sign off on. This group could make suggested best practices around community engagement. If that's public, and if you ignore them as a sector, people can ask, why they aren't following it? Supporters of the process can speak up, and they need to show up to have input. The real interest is in making sure schools are good. We can do better. We're currently in a process where we will lose the school if it doesn't get better fast. We need to be proactive, even if that's unpopular. We need to get the right people in building and the right program.

Task Force: This is important because the discussion is broader than just PCSB.

Facilitator: I like the next step of recommendations. We could put together a draft suggestion of when and the parameters around engaging the community.

Task Force: We could take each circle, with a slightly different graphic, try and flesh those out. We could get input what those would look like. That would be great. Then we have the trip to Denver to better understand and iterate.

Task Force: It would be great to see more detail for the first two bubbles to see where we ended up. For example, the Star Rating system for closing decisions. Will the school quality framework include other variables or only ESSA?

Task Force: These were decisions made outside of us.

Task Force: What we talked about earlier, this group isn't deciding what each leader considers. That's what was clarified.

Task Force: We can add detail, but these things are defined not by us.

Task Force: The common school quality framework is defined, but the bubble doesn't mean that's the only thing considered for opening schools.

Task Force: What's bothering me is it's one set of data. Where does the rest of the information that goes into this process fall?

Facilitator: We first talked about 9 buckets worth of data. One bucket is school quality. The strategic citywide data and analysis has live-go patterns - all 9 buckets can be fleshed out to see what've been thinking of.

Task Force: We need a bubble about data.

Facilitator: Some things we can't flesh out yet, like what will DCPS take into consideration because there is a separate working group figuring this out? We don't differentiate opening and closing on this cycle – maybe we should. The reason that some of the detail isn't here is because we're all figuring out as we go.

Task Force: What we can do for next steps?

Task Force: If we frame as set of recommendations, what exists cross sector and recommendations on top of this. Is the foundational piece as far as the body can get?

Task Force: It would be great if the group made suggestions for what could go into this. Here's what you should be looking for. Even if at a 20,000 foot level. We make decisions better when people feels there's a standard we're being held to.

Task Force: It would be helpful to understand what the community engagement process is about, and are there other big picture things we want to surface we don't have ability to make recommendations on? Some mechanism for cross sector engagement is valuable in itself.

Task Force: You've put it on the table, the whole group is to decide the value in continuing a group in some form.

Task Force: Denver has a whole structure for collaboration. They have a common elected school board, and their bodies and committees that do that.

Task Force: We could look at it in lots of ways, but there's value in forcing the issue. It's easy for everyone to go back into their sector after this. This is something we should continue.

Facilitator: So next steps are, this cycle is fleshed out the best we can at this point, identify which decisions are already determined and where there is room for the Task Force to make recommendations, and we'll create a strawman on values and goals of community engagement and what that means. We also have to share a draft timeline on what this cycle could be.

Task Force: What goes in the 9 buckets? We know what Denver has, what do we want?

Facilitator: We can send more on the strategic analysis and what makes up each of the components.