OCS Working Group Call
Date: October 11, 2017; 10:00am
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)
- Melissa Kim | Chief Academic Officer, Secondary Schools, KIPP DC; former principal, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- Mary Levy | Independent education analyst, Former DC Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Former Washington Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
- Scott Pearson | Executive Director, Public Charter School Board (PCSB)

Call Summary:

- [Ramin Taheri (facilitator) recapped the previous meeting and noted that the group has started talking about the framework]
- Task Force: In the process, it says that it is a coordinated process; it is a coordination of processes. This is semantics point but is important. Want to make sure this is clear.
- Facilitator: You're right it's not a coordinated process. But we are calling parts of it coordinated. Example: the circle that talks about coordinated approvals is really talking about how PCSB has its process and DCPS has its process and that the coordinated process is about understanding what each sector is doing. One part of the process that's coordinated but it is not a unified process. We tried to put down short description of what we see happening.
- Task Force: In citywide analysis, the common school quality framework is one thing you're trying to talk about there, is that right? There are other components we discussed on other calls.
- Facilitator: Yes
- Task Force: About SCA, when we put out equity reports today, it's done by OSSE but there's a steering committee so a question- is this SCA just put together by the DME or is there a group providing input?
- Facilitator: That's a good question. DME data team will take the lead but will work closely with someone from PCSB and DCPS. DME is coordinating, but it's not in a vacuum.
- Task Force: I get that but what does working closely mean? What if there are things that we or DCPS think should go in there. Does it go in or does it not?
  - Facilitator: There's no reason to not have more analysis pieces in there. This is something we need to explore further and make sure we are all clear. DME gets really helpful feedback from PCSB and DCPS that has shaped a number of things. We are imagining the same thing for the SCA but we need to flesh this out.
- Task Force: Need to flesh out who's at the table and what's being done publicly. Afraid there will be informal communication between agency members. Information and analysis from SCA needs to be communicated out publicly in a consistent way.
  - Facilitator: These are some of the implementation details we need to work through.

- [Facilitator introduces the circle around the Coordinated Call for Quality Schools and Programs] Want these two processes to be happening at the same time during the year; that's what we mean by a coordinated CFQS. Similar to Denver where they turn SCA into request for offers. Solicit applications to fill these needs.
- Task Force: At what point will we talk through the process that PCSB goes through right now and how the public is engaged in that?
    - Facilitator: Can you clarify your question more? We are going to talk about community engagement at the next CSCTF meeting.
- Task Force: Want to see the entire process. Wanted an entire discussion of how public is engaged or not engaged in the process. Thought we were going to talk about this.
    - Task Force: What changes would you like to see?
        - Task Force: Can't say what changes I would like to see. In general, public engagement process is not clear.
            - Facilitator: On the table to talk about community engagement at the task force meeting on the 24th. Want to bring it up then when we have more people form the group. Get out all the questions you want answered and try to come to some sort of agreement.
- Task Force: PCSB has processes to collect input but would be happy to bat around ideas about how to do that even better.
- [Facilitator moved on to coordinated approval process] This is not about DME being in charge of approvals but we do want to see better coordination between sectors on approvals and better communication around that and the use of common data and analyses from SCA.
- Task Force: Occurred to me that we shouldn't have a conversation about what PCSB does or doesn't do now. We should talk about coordinated process that has sufficient public engagement with timing that is done appropriately. Timeline is important and should be coordinated. If we are talking about that, we are trying to move forward rather than look back.
    - Facilitator: Hope to talk about this at the next meeting. If we flesh out this process a little bit. The DME has been thinking about where community engagement falls on the timeline. We want broad agreement from this group on the framework so we can then start building out community engagement. There are questions around community engagement at different steps in this cycle.
- Task Force: Should step back to the beginning of creating this framework. Most of the circles were blank during the September meeting. We had small discussions - on what basis did the blanks get filled in?
    - Facilitator: There were good conversations based broadly on what is being done in Denver. We wrote next to them what was in the notes, and if we got something wrong, let us know.
- Task Force: The Common School Framework doesn't capture my view. I said that using the ESSA start rating system is not something I could ever sign off on. It is so limited in what it tells you about schools.
    - Facilitator: In terms of measuring school quality, we have arrived at a place as a city where we feel comfortable with the ESSA star rating. But it is ultimately one component in the SCA. We are trying to get a more holistic picture and capture more information with the SCA.

- Task Force: I would say PCSB uses the PMF and school academic quality as our principle way of closing schools; if ESSA is going to do that, then the sectors are using similar things, though I'm not sure what DCPS is doing. Don't envision PCBS sitting down to get input from others on approvals. The board votes and makes the decisions. I'm not sure the way this is written that this is something I can support. We aren't going to sit down and say "well here are these schools, which ones should we approve?"
  - Facilitator: One of the things we do not aim to change is the way the board approves charter applications. We do want to see better coordination. We want to see PCSB, in approving applications and in applicants writing applications, using information from the SCA. We don't want to restrict decisions completely to what's in the SCA. Even in Denver, they still have opportunities for charter apps to be approved outside of that process. Come to a more coordinated place.
- Task Force: The bottom left of the framework makes sense: DCPS and PCSB publicly solicit proposals. Once we get above that and talk about potential approvals and locations, that doesn't work.
  - Task Force: This looks like basic coordination and I'm hearing you say that PCSB is not interested in that.
    - Task Force: Correct, there's a lot of other stuff on this chart that we are interested in doing.
    - Facilitator: All of us have looked at parts of this framework before and said this is a good progress. There might be problematic wording. There might be desire to do more. Let's try to get back to where we see some agreement and focus on that. Where there is a problem in wording and implementation, let's try to fix it.
- Task Force: With regards to the SCA circle: I think we should word it so it includes the common school quality framework as well as other data points beyond ESSA. That way you don't make the jump to thinking it only includes ESSA star ratings.
  - Task Force: There's a way to build on ESSA star rating, we need to articulate the other metrics. There was a call where we went over a different visual that listed the other possible metrics, and we should merge that.
- Task Force: Around the approvals circle: it will be helpful for people to react to a suggested timeline to see when DCPS and PCSB are making these decisions and to see how it makes sense with the common application process. It would be great for the public to see how to engage and where and when. This is one step getting us closer to being transparent. There is misinformation about the charter law. We should do work to teach people about that law so that when they engage, they engage with more knowledge.
  - Facilitator: Part of the problem here is that this is a very simple graphic. We are working on a timeline that provides more explanation and that includes the community engagement piece. The public needs to understand the landscape within which we are working here. It's a matter of getting it right and I think we can.
  - Task Force: I really believe we need some fundamentals of our landscape at every community meeting to talk about why the entities exist under certain guidelines. Like an opening video or something.

- Task Force: When we are talking, community engagement could mean two things: 1) specifically in Task Force recommendations themselves 2) community engagement during process of SCA. Are we talking about both?
    - Facilitator: Right now, we are talking about the second one. The Task Force was assembled to put this framework together. We will talk about community engagement on the 24th as related to the framework.
        - Get a better understanding of the SCA beyond 8-9 buckets
        - Provide something to look at regarding timelines where the community can get involved and in what ways
        - As a task force, present to the community to get everyone on the same page, like an introduction video about DC's education landscape
- Task Force: In the graphic, it looks like one circle informs the other which then informs the other. Is that supposed to be the case?
    - Facilitator: In some ways it informs and in others it just precedes in terms of time. We can get into more of the details when we see timeline around each step in the framework.
        - Task Force: We need a timeline and what information informs it. This is not the right graphic.
            - Facilitator: We are working on drafts of that now and will share.
- Task Force: When we talk about including information beyond the ESSA star rating, what do you have in mind?
    - Task Force: Have to go back to governance framework in the district. When you talk about the factors that the PCSB considers, that's between charter school applicants and the Board. They make promises in their charters and they get closed when they don't perform up to their promises or when there is mismanagement. DCPS looks at a set of factors and that's different. Difference between Denver and our set-up is profound. These differences have implications for opening, closing, and siting.
- Task Force: Do you envision any level of low performance of a DCPS school that could be low enough to lead to closure or reconstitution?
    - Task Force: Yes, but we need to be persuaded that it would make a difference. Has never led to an improvement in performance. It hasn't worked.
    - Task Force: DCPS and PCSB schools should be treated differently when making school closure decisions because DCPS schools are citywide whereas charters have a different community role. We want to see a differentiation of how schools are treated. Need to see how students will continue to have viable by-right schools. We want to know that there's a better strategy to do this in the future.
    - Task Force: We need a much more articulated and differentiated decision making process for the closure or reconstitution of by-right neighborhood schools.
        - Task Force: Agree that there should be a different standard for DCPS schools. Level of low performance for DCPS needs to be lower than for charters. Closing for neighborhood schools has a different impact. Is there any standard that is too low, what is the threshold?
            - Task Force: There needs to be criteria to differentiate closing for by-right and for charter. At-risk group had talked about identifying schools that are beating the odds. A group of us Task Force

members have come up with recommendations for these. This takes into account factors like the level of at-risk students the school is serving. These would help to create a more robust definition for when to close DCPS schools.

- ▪ Facilitator: We haven't had a conversation about closing schools. This wasn't on the agenda for the Task Force. DCPS is still working on their process for closing schools. PCSB has been very transparent about theirs. If this Task Force makes a recommendation on focusing resources to schools that are beating the odds for at-risk students, the group's recommendations will be used during implementation.
    - • Task Force: The idea is also use criteria in reverse to identify schools that are not beating the odds, that are not serving students well.
- • Task Force: Reconstitution is a very specific process; staff can reapply for their jobs. It's not overall school improvement. DCPS has not tried that hard with school improvement in place. Promised 5 years ago that there would be extra resources for 40 lowest performing schools. Until we try other means, why we shouldn't go looking for different improvements.
- • Task Force: Can you promise that we will talk about school closures in different ways?
    - o Facilitator: DCPS just unveiled their strategic plan and is working through what is going to be done with regards to closing or reconstituting schools. We never said we were going to apply closure processes across the board. Chancellor has said there will be a lot more thinking and a lot more community engagement around this and is not planning to mothball schools. We will look at community engagement questions at the next Task Force meeting.

Call ended at 10:57am