

2020 – 21 Chancellor’s Parent Advisory Board

November 19, 2020

Meeting Notes

Agenda:

Chancellor Lewis D. Ferebee’s Parent Advisory Board November 2020 Meeting Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
6:00 - 6:05 pm	Welcome and Overview of Agenda
6:05 – 6:10 pm	SEL Opener
6:10 – 6:20 pm	Member Spotlight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member 1 – Maria Vanessa Magana Martinez • Member 2 – Hah’Nah Harper • Member 3 – Eduvirgen Peralta Cruz
6:20 – 7:10 pm	Updates and Q&A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reopening Update (Chancellor Ferebee and Corie Colgan) • Budget Process Update (Allen Francois and Eli Hoffman)
7:10 - 7:55 pm	Deep Dive Small Group Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep Dive Group #1 Budget Operations Allen Francois, Eli Hoffman and Jerry Ilar • Deep Dive Group #2 SEL and Mental Health Kenya Coleman, William Blake and Natalie Treadgold • Deep Dive Group # 3 Communications and Engagement Shanita Burney, Liz Bartolomeo, Sarah Parker and Claudette Monroy
7:55 - 8:00 pm	Closing and Feedback Form

Board Members in Attendance:

Name	Ward	School Community	In Attendance
Maria Vanessa Magana Martinez	1	Cleveland Elementary School	X
Hugh Beshers	1	Oyster Adams Elementary School	X
Michael Forster	1	Garrison Elementary School	X
Jillian Perrier	1	CHEC	

Jen Kane	2	Marie Reed Elementary School	X
Patrick Shaw	2	Hyde-Addison Elementary School	X
Yasmin Hernandez	2	Bancroft Elementary School	
Buwon Tran	2	School Without Walls High School	Withdrew from Advisory Board in November
Jessica Parson's O'Connell	3	Stoddert Elementary School and Hardy Middle School	X
Jill Bohnenkamp	3	Lafayette Elementary School	X
Oyinye (Cindy) Ukeneru - Steve	3	Deal Middle School and Hearst Elementary School	
John Roane	3	Hardy Middle School	
Vanessa Rubio	4	Brightwood Education Campus	X
Jennifer Snowden - McKay	4	Lafayette Elementary School and Deal Middle School	X
Diana Delgado	4	Bruce-Monroe Elementary School	X
Sumner McRae	4	Takoma Education Campus	X
Ricardo Villalba	5	Marie Reed Elementary School	X
Eduvirgen Peralta Cruz	5	School-Within-a-School	X
LaKresia Whittington	5	Banneker High School	
Margaux Delotte - Bennett	5	Wheatley Education Campus	X
Matthew Watson	6	Wilson High School and Eaton Elementary School	X
Julie Muir	6	Miner Elementary School	
Timothy Grisham	6	Van Ness Elementary School	X
Anjuli Shivshanker	6	Peabody Elementary School	X

Sherell Anderson	7	Houston Elementary School	X
Chantel Washington	7	Garfield Elementary School	X
Hah-Na'h Harper	7	Bard High School and Roosevelt STAY High School	X
Jackie Alvarado	7	Bruce-Monroe Elementary School	X
Angela Humbert	8	Jefferson Middle School	X
Shavon Collier	8	Ketcham Elementary School, Kramer Middle School and Luke C. Moore High School	
Sekou Toure	8	Payne Elementary School	X
Quiana Lamons	8	Ballou High School	X

DCPS Staff in Attendance:

- Lewis D. Ferebee – Chancellor
- Shanita Burney – Communications and Engagement, Officer
- Sarah Parker – Community Engagement, Deputy Chief
- Elizabeth Bartolomeo – Communications, Deputy Chief
- Corie Colgan – Office of Teaching and Learning, Chief
- William Blake – Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Culture, Director
- Kenya Coleman - School Mental Health, Senior Director
- Allen Francois – School Funding, Director
- Eli Hoffman – Community Affairs and Engagement, Manager
- Natalie Treadgold – Family Engagement, Manager
- Jerry Ilar – Public Events and Engagement, Coordinator
- Claudette Monroy – Community Engagement, Coordinator

Summary of Comments and Questions:

Discussion

- Reopening plans felt very rushed and chaotic in both the beginning of the school year and for term 2. It was hard to prepare kids and plan for what is next. What is DCPS planning on doing to prevent this feeling of chaos for Term 3? What is being done to prevent the social emotional stress with changing plans?

- Is the number of students in the CARE Classrooms still capped at 11 students?
- I am the parent of a middle schooler (6th grader) and we are really feeling the burn of pre-teens having trouble with depression and mental health concerns. Are there any thoughts on Wednesdays where students can meet in person and engage with other teenagers?
- I have felt my son's school has had a lot of communications with the parents and giving plenty of opportunities for parents to be engaged in their students' learning. There was a sense of nervousness about virtual learning, but I have been happy with virtual learning. Will there be an option for parents to choose virtual learning over in-person learning if given an opportunity to return to school?
- We are hearing CDC give guidance to stay home for Thanksgiving, there are different messages about going back that makes the decision of returning to in-person learning stressful.
- Are the models shown, do schools need to follow each model or will they be able to adjust and customize, especially being at a Dual Language School?
- According to recent surveys, it is important to have full-time psychologists and counselors for students during this pandemic as we bring students back to schools. Will there be supports for students?
- Yes, schools can go outside of the four options/models, just as long they are in the safety parameters.

Comments and questions from chat:

- Why is DCPS saying that it is opening schools though if you have not yet reached an agreement with teachers? That feels like it should be the first step - how can we trust that this process is collaborative with teachers and parents?
- I also still want to know what DCPS is doing to prioritize SEL in terms of transitions to and from in-person. This was something highlighted as a priority for this school year. Given the challenging nature of re-opening under uncertain circumstances. What can the district do to prioritize student mental health?
 - Answer: We will discuss how DCPS is helping schools realize students' social emotional needs via our Trauma Responsive Schools model and how to access additional support in the SEL and School Mental Health break out session. Please join us.
 - Answer: If you are not in that deep dive group; you can always email Kenya Coleman later.
- I'm in the budget group. I'm interested though in how SEL is being woven into the general curriculum and ensuring there is space in class groups to process the challenges of transition and uncertainty between in-person and distance learning.
 - Answer: DCPS has 450 school based social workers, school psychologists and school counselors. We also have 89 Community Based Organizations (CBO) clinicians and 39 Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) clinicians. There is no shortage of SEL staff.
- Great to hear testing will be happening. Any idea about the regularity of that testing?

Deep Dive Discussion Groups

Budget Operations

- Please join us at the DCPS Public Budget Hearing on Monday, November 23 from 5:30pm-7:30pm.
- DCPS is primarily funded with local funds (>80%) supplemented by non-local funds and non-local funds from federal and philanthropy.
- DCPS Receives Three Type of Grants –
 - Formula
 - Entitlement
 - Competitive
- Engagement is important meeting with school community through the LSAT (Local School Advisory Team).
- Initial Budget Allocation Worksheet Enhancements
 - Fund Source Transparency
 - Flexibility of Positions
 - Robust Budget Narrative
- Engagement
 - Principal and LSAT Collaboration – Principals are responsible for final decisions regarding budget.
 - LSATs can discuss specific staff positions along with general opinions and thoughts of the school's budget recommendations for the Principal.
- LSAT Sign Off – It's not approval of the budget but rather a sign that they were engaged in the budget process.
- How can we engage more broadly on the budget, especially on this year for Fiscal Year 22? Making sure folks are in the position to be successful when release budgets in the Spring.
- How do we bring more people into the budget conversations who are not on the LSATs?

Questions:

- Is Head Start funding due to return to DCPS next school year?
- These are continuing conversations, but we do not have updated information to answer the question.
- Is the Head Start grant you apply every year or good for several years?
- It is typically good for several years and is a competitive grant. We still have Early Childhood classrooms that we are funding with local dollars.
- Where would we find this information? Can you provide the link, perhaps show how we could find our school on the website?
- As schools have lost students due to the pandemic, will there be a big drop in budgets due to changing enrollments for schools?

- We are trying to ensure schools do not have large fluctuations in their budgets with Stabilization Funds.
- With so much uncertainty with the pandemic, how are you able to budget correctly during this time?
- In the summer, we had some shifts where security funds of \$4million redirected to schools' social emotional supports. Travel budgets were frozen and were added to the new Fiscal Year School Budgets.
- Some people feel very locked into the LSAT meeting due to its confidentiality, and information isn't distributed until the budget is public. The deadlines are so tight to respond. It's hard to talk about positions since they are tied to people.
- I recommend partnering with Parent University on LSATs to do more outreach.
- Are there any surveys sent to parents related to NPS (non-personnel spending) priorities for their schools?
- Have schools partnered with other schools that have a super active LSAT with those that have minimal participation?
- Some schools that have minimal participation do not know the power of the LSATs and PTOs to harness their resources and ideas.

Socio-Emotional Learning and Mental Health

- Introductions: Dr. Blake and Dr. Coleman
- So far, I'm really happy with this approach. Especially supporting teachers. What about supporting parents who may have lost a loved one? Our families are going through a lot as well.
 - Answer: Yes, highlighted Parent U as a resource.
- Have educators had training on the model and approach?
 - Answer: Yes, have been reiterating as part of trainings since May (through Summer and Fall and the rest of the school year). This is an ongoing conversation between central office and educators.
- Do all schools have mental health professionals?
 - Answer: Yes, over 450 across all schools. In addition, 89 clinicians in our schools who work for community partners. All have at least a full-time social worker, at least a .5 psychologist, and all high schools have a counselor. We are trying to make it easier for students to access these professionals. We've streamlined that process so there is just one referral form.
- I work at an adult charter school. The trauma is very real with our immigrant families. Personally, I have a counselor and that I speak with. We sometimes think that kids don't know what's happening in the world, but they know everything. We have to teach them to name their feelings.
- I feel like families really don't know all the services and supports that are available. I love the universal referral form and that it can be filled out by either a student or staff member.

Communications and Engagement

Introduction by Shanita Burney around Reopen Community Corps and family surveys.

Discussion questions

1. Overall reactions to RCC approach?
2. How does the timing feel?
3. What questions or concerns come up for you?

Comments and questions:

- I am not trying to take a standpoint either for or against the Teachers Union but how much power do they have in deciding if students go back to school?
 - Answer: DCPS is trying our best to make the safety accommodations that the Teachers' Union is requesting but we also need to continue with our planning for reopening of schools.
- I am concerned about students getting the virus and then giving it to their family members.
- I am also concerned because I work at a school and I see the challenges with technology and a lot of students and parents are not accessing the learning platforms properly.
- Can we create better supports around technology for parents and students who are struggling with distance learning?
- Students are trying to do it on their own- even elementary school students. Some are not even logging on because they don't know how to do it.
- We need to engage with the community and put a focus on how to better assist families and to set the norm again that students need to attend school every day.
 - Answer: We are trying our best to provide tools and trainings to parents. But it's true that we need to continue supporting families.

Learning Preference Survey

Discussion question:

1) What in-person programming option do you prefer for your child?

1) CARE classrooms 2) In-Person Learning 3) Either 4) Neither (I prefer virtual)

- Just to clarify, when you send the survey, do you clarify that hybrid is an option? It's overwhelming for parents to pick either distance learning or in school.
 - Answer: We are hoping that through the survey and the Reopen Corps
- We also need to be realistic and manage parents' expectations that their feedback is important but also clarify why you arrived to an answer or also share information with parents prior so that they are not caught off guard.
 - Answer: Yes, that's great feedback, it's tricky because schools might come up with their own models and it was not part of the survey.
- I appreciate that you are taking feedback from principals and it's a more grassroots approach.
- Please share that information broadly with parents that principals will have input on the type of models they choose.
- We want to make sure that equity remains as our priority. It's clear that some schools do a great job at engaging with all of their families and others struggle incorporating the whole community.
- In the spirit of transparency, you need to add a disclaimer that plans might change again because it's hard to plan with the pandemic.
- We have to figure out the best path forward to collect diverse feedback and not miss the window to release information or to make plans according to that feedback.

- Answer: We know that DCPS has come across as tone deaf and we are trying to be better at being transparent on why we have made the decisions that we have made.

Summary of Feedback Survey:

Nine parents and guardians filled out the exit for the month of November. Below are the average scores for each question as well as additional comments submitted.

Question	Score
Please rate the organization and logistics of the meeting / Por favor califique la organizacion y logisticas de la reunion	4.67
How satisfied were you with the opportunity to share feedback around key initiatives? / ¿Qué tan satisfecho(a) estas con la oportunidad de compartir tu opinion acerca de iniciativas claves?	4
How satisfied were you with the opportunity to share your own perspective or insight? / ¿Qué tan satisfecho(a) estas con la oportunidad que tuviste para compartir tu perspectiva?	3.67
Please rate your experience with your Deep Dive group / Por favor, califique su experiencia con su grupo de discusion	4.22
Which Deep Dive group discussion were you part of? / En cual de los grupos de discusion participo?	Deep Dive #1= 3 Deep Dive #2= 2 Deep Dive #3= 4
How would you rate the meeting overall? / ¿Cómo calificaría la reunión en general?	4.22

*Scores are on a 1 – 5 scale. 1 as the lowest and 5 as the highest.

Additional Comments from Feedback Survey:

- Thank you for taking the time to hear us out.
- There wasn't much time for feedback in our deep dive session.
- Meeting is very informational. Wish it could be longer.
- I wasn't able to access the chat feature for the first half of the evening, but that is more a technical glitch than a reflection on the meeting.
- Enjoyed the conversation, presentation and candor. Would have liked more time in the deep dive groups.
- So far so good!
- It just doesn't feel as though we actually get to collaborate or really provide ideas of feedback on very much at all. We get updates on things that have already happened or are already in motion to the extent that real input doesn't seem possible. So far, the Deep Dive groups make a little more space for feedback but even the format of the one I'm in, at least, doesn't feel like a session built to encourage brainstorming and sharing of ideas - it mostly feels like DCPS is providing information to us rather than working together with us.
- Sometimes I feel like the meetings are just more updates than really contributions or discussions on helping to determine a process or working collaborative to find solutions to problems. It feels more like an FYI session.

- I appreciate the Chancellor's candor and openness about the challenges related to reopening. His openness and forthrightness as well as his even-keel-ness is inviting and sets a climate of curiosity. Certainly, there are far more questions than we have time to answer and surely disagreements with DCPS' decisions and approaches, but the Chancellor's demeanor and answers provides increasing appreciation. The Deep Dives are helpful, but the learning gap is steep. I've mentioned this before but having some introductory reading or learning would be tremendously helpful for those in the Deep Dives (I am in the Budgeting group). In the absence of this introductory material, I am lost in the discussions, and find myself asking what I suspect are very basic questions. Perhaps the others in the group are more comfortable with the material. But for a newbie to the topic, additional pre-requisite information can be helpful.