

**DCPS Rising Leadership Committee Meeting**  
**September 28, 2016 @ 6:00pm**  
**Trinity Washington University, Main Hall**

**Committee Members:**

*Present:*

Gina Adams	Co-Chair, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs for FedEx
Pat McGuire	Co-Chair, President, Trinity Washington University
Tara Brown	DCPS Parent (Ward 8)
Liz Davis	President, Washington Teachers Union (W5)
Ed Fisher	DCPS Parent, Director of Community Affairs - CareFirst BlueCross/BlueShield, DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative Board Member (W7)
Nicky Goren	President & Chief Executive Officer, Meyer Foundation, DCPS parent (W3)
Hope Harrod	Burroughs Elementary School teacher, 2012 DCPS Teacher of the Year (W1)
Maurice Kie	Manager, Life Pieces to Masterpieces, Eastern HS Alumnus (W8)
Jonte Lee	Wilson High School teacher (W4)
Wayan Vota	DCPS parent, Senior Mobile Advisor, FHI 360 (W4)
Michaela English	President, Fight for Children (W2)

*On phone:*

*Absent:*

Rosa Carrillo	DCPS parent, Language Services Program Director, Multicultural Community Services, DC Language Access Coalition member (
Kevin Dillard	Woodson High School student and Student Government President (W7)
Denise Forte	DCPS parent, congressional staff (W6)
Thomas Penny	General Manager – Courtyard Marriot Convention Center, Raise DC Leadership Council member, DC Public Education Fund Board Member, DC National Academy Foundation Hospitality Board Member
Victor Reinoso	DCPS parent, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Hopscotch Ventures, (W4)
Maria Tukeva	DCPS parent, Senior Mobile Advisor, FHI 360 (W4)

*Committee Staff:*

Jennifer Niles	Deputy Mayor for Education
Claudia Lujan	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education
Taneka Miller	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education
Hannah Holliday	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

**Welcome/Meeting Introduction**

Co-Chair Pat McGuire welcomed the committee members and thanked FedEx for providing the food for the meetings. She then invited the committee members to reintroduce themselves to the group.

Co-Chair McGuire outlined the agenda and goals for the meeting, which were to discuss the community engagement report and continue developing recommendations for the Mayor.

**Progress To Date**

Claudia Lujan provided an overview of the citywide engagement efforts since the last time the Committee met. This included capturing feedback from 140 more people via the online survey. This uptick in online participation is believed to be a result of outreach efforts from DCPS and DME that went out via email the previous week communicating to stakeholders that the deadline for online survey participation was 9/23.

She also highlighted efforts to engage students, through four student focus groups. Ms. Lujan thanked Committee member Jonte Lee for his role in facilitating the groups and organizing the one at Wilson HS. She reviewed the feedback of the first two student focus groups, which took place at Roosevelt High School and Woodrow Wilson High School earlier in the week. Two additional focus groups were scheduled at School without Walls and HD Woodson high schools. At the focus groups, students were asked the same questions that were asked in the community forums. Student feedback aligned with the themes from the community forums, with some of the examples given being school-specific.

*Comments/Questions:*

- Student focus groups should be better publicized; people should know that they are being held.
  - Student feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the community engagement report.
- The students were very perceptive and had come up with thoughtful answers without being prompted.
- Members speculated that the reason that modernization was highlighted as a success was because they were from two modernized schools – Roosevelt and Wilson. Students commented that they feel for their friends who they are not in schools that have not been modernized.

Ms. Lujan also presented a revised Committee timeline. The fourth meeting moved to October 17 with the goal to submit the memo to the Mayor on October 21.

The meeting then paused for the swearing in of a committee member who had not been previously sworn in.

**Review Draft Community Engagement Report:**

Claudia Luján introduced time for the committee members to share out feedback and reactions to the draft community engagement report that was shared with committee members on Monday. She emphasized that the DME team would be taking committee feedback via email or call until the end of the week. She highlighted that the DME team is working to incorporate the student feedback and make sure the themes are still resonating. Student quotes will be incorporated. The final version of the report will be designed with pictures. The appendices will include the raw worksheet and table notes date. The final community engagement report will not be professionally printed, but will be made available online. The final report is expected to be released the first week in October.

*Comments/Questions:*

- Is October 21<sup>st</sup> is the date of recommendations to the Mayor? Can the Committee refer to the community engagement report when creating those recommendations?
  - Yes and the Committee should feel free to reference the report.
- Have the participant names been taken out?
  - Yes, from all the responses.

**Committee Recommendations**

Co-chair McGuire asked the Committee to refer to the draft outline of the recommendation report and share any reactions or feedback as she went through each section of the proposed outline.

*Comments/Questions:*

- Is there a need for an introduction, since the Mayor knows why this Committee exists?

- The report will be made public so there should be some introduction and background information. However, for this meeting the Committee should focus on recommendations section of the outline.
- Where is the question about succession planning that is was previously discussed? There needs to be a question about what experience they have with the succession planning process.
  - What would be a strong answer to this question of succession planning? What would the Mayor listen for?
  - Knowing that people in this position have an average tenure of 18 months, a question should be “How do we prepare to replace you should something happen? What kind of processes would you put in place to fill your position?”
  - If they are leaving their current district, a question could be “How will old district go on without you?” It is important to assess how they would treat their current district because it is a direct reflection on how they would treat DCPS.
- A committee member noted that succession planning is really about building a senior team that is capable of managing during a transition; unlike in the corporate world, they are not responsible for having their successor picked out since the Mayor chooses the chancellor. The question could be “How do you build a strong management team who would be capable of taking over should there be another search?”
  - It could be an ethical question about in what state they leave their previous position.
- While not related to the recommendations outline, a committee member asked about how the new chancellor would be on-boarded and if it would happen during this school year.
  - DM Niles responded that it would depend on who it is and when; ideally there would be some overlap between the interim chancellor and the new chancellor.
- Another committee member noted that the first two sections the outline are much more robust than the last two. The questions involving teaching components should be beefed up. There should be a point about importance of motivating, maintaining, and supporting strong principals and teachers.
- Additionally, in the section about the education landscape in DC, there should be a question about transparency and community engagement, given that the Committee heard a lot about this. This section should also ask about improving cross-sector coordination.
- The chancellor has to go after sources of funding so there should be a section about their financial experiences.
  - What is the scope of the chancellor’s financial responsibility?
    - Strategic planning and budgeting are parts of the chancellor’s responsibilities.
  - Financial responsibility is really an issue of equity and how money is distributed to equitably address schools across the city. Interview question - How will you disseminate resources and funds to schools across DC?
- The point was made that addressing teacher turnover is also an equity issue.
- In response, another member brought up that equity is a misleading term and the question should be about how DCPS is going to allocate their funds. It’s not an equal allocation because it’s not equitable if some students already have resources.
- Someone else expanded on this point, stating that equity matters in terms of equitable outcomes; ultimately everyone wants equitable outcomes for students across the system.
- The chancellor should take responsibility for the budget and how they are bringing in money. There should be questions to assess their fundraising and development skills.
  - Co-chair McGuire commented that these types of questions should be put under the questions about management experience but that the fundraising question is more of a political question.

- How would the Chancellor consider the wealth of resources in the DC community beyond the walls of DCPS? How would they strategically partner with the wealth that is already in the city?
- How would the candidate engage with SPED community and their experiences in education?
- It was proposed that the candidate should come in with preliminary strategic thinking around DCPS and that they should have to demonstrate how they think strategically.
  - Another committee member highlighted that the Mayor needs assess their ability to do this and that there could be a rubric for demonstrating this.
- A committee member comments that the questions should flow from the experience questions.

Co-chair McGuire asked the Committee how the mayor should judge the candidates' questions and answers on racial justice and equity. She also referenced the achievement gap, since that was prevalent during the community forums, how should the Mayor question the candidate around that?

*Comments/Questions:*

- A committee member proposed adding the following interview question - What is the root cause of the achievement gap and how would they addresses the factors causing the achievement gap?
- Co-chair McGuire commented that this kind of question should stem from a question about how to address the achievement gap. She asked members how they would react if a candidate responded with the idea that "poverty is an excuse"
  - A committee member responded that it's not their job to solve poverty but that they would have to address it.
  - Another member commented that a good answer might be that they would help "solve" poverty by providing a good education
  - A member expressed that the candidate should understand how poverty plays a factor in the achievement gap and how education plays a role in offsetting the effects of poverty on children (opportunity gap)
- Candidate should understand how racism intersects with poverty in our city and that he/she would work across government and non-profit entities to work toward solving these issues.
- A member expressed their concern that school reform in DC saw poverty as an excuse -- and this approach doesn't work. They highlighted the importance of understanding a candidate's experience working with communities/students of color in order to get at how well they know DC and the contrasts between having highest number of college graduates and having high numbers of adult illiteracy.
- The candidate should understand the complexity of the city - it's not just about race; there is a lot of depth to the problem, it's also about a socio-economic gap.
- The Mayor should assess how they would gain ground without losing ground on places where progress has been made.
- A committee member asked if there was a need to assess a candidate's position on common core and PARCC
  - The candidates should know DC student scores and assess how students who are already behind eight years ago are farther behind than they were before.
- There was some agreement that improvement need to be made while staying the course (that schools are moving ahead but some things need to be fixed)
  - A member commented that the 300 people from the forums do not reflect the entire city and that there was not consensus on the idea that things are on a good path.

- A member noted that even in ward 8 some strides have been made and that people afraid to acknowledge progress.
- Co-chair McGuire expressed her desire for the recommendations to be honest - acknowledge the successes but focus on asking the candidates how they you close the gaps where things don't work and where more attention must be paid.
- The new chancellor should make decisions based on results – focus on data driven decision making.
  - Community members want someone who makes data-driven and data-informed decisions

Co-chair McGuire then prompted the group to look toward the third recommendation area -

**The candidate should be strategic and thoughtful in their approach to learning and instruction.**

- How would a candidate shift focus toward content and away from testing; how would they address the issue of offering well rounded courses to all students?
- Co-chair McGuire noted that there was concern in the community report about testing and that the Mayor would need to talk with candidate about a balance between instruction and testing.
- A committee member asked whether there is consistency of curriculum across schools
  - Several teachers and parents on the Committee answered that there is no consistency; students could be learning completely different things across the city. Some teachers have no passion for it or certification for the classes they teach.
- A member brought up that the Mayor should probe the candidates for curriculum design and how they would work for curriculum consistency and teacher preparation around the subjects they are teaching.
  - A committee member asked if this is a problem the chancellor should address or do principals do this? Should there be more oversight of principals?
    - A committee member responded that there is budget autonomy: principals can allocate across their schools.
- A committee member identified elements that are missing from the outline. In particular, questions that capture intent; what is the candidates purpose for taking position, etc. (to give an idea of potential commitment)
  - It was mentioned that some of this is captured in questions about motives (at the beginning of the outline)

DME Niles directs a question to the whole committee asking about the passion for instructional expertise vs. someone who has strong management expertise? She noted that there aren't too many people with both. She asked the Committee to reflect on this balance—if they had to pick one or the other.

- Committee members expressed a preference for having someone who was a manager of a complex organization. They noted that he/she wouldn't have to know about instruction but is essential that they know how to manage the organization well.
- Another committee member stated that they should have someone who is an effective manager who knows that they need someone for curriculum; someone who is self-aware enough to know what they don't know.
- A different committee member noted that it is telling that list of managerial questions are longer than instructional questions
- Someone else added that the best leaders hire people who are better than themselves and possess the quality of humility.

Co-chair McGuire noted requested that committee members email her any unexpressed thoughts about the outline. She committed to drafting the recommendation memo and sending it out to the Committee by October 14<sup>th</sup>. Committee members will be asked to review and provide feedback prior to the next meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Looking Ahead and Next Steps**

Taneka Miller, Legislative Director in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, gave a brief overview of the Council process triggered once the Mayor submits her selection to Council.

#### *Comments/Questions:*

- How soon will Mayor start interviewing? Will this happen after the Committee submits its report on October 21<sup>st</sup>?
  - She will start interviewing after reading the report, not before
  - We are still identifying candidates and also still accepting nominations.
- How many candidates or nominations have been received so far?
  - DME Niles responded that she didn't want to say because the number is not important and will not affect timeline; she is not concerned about the number of people in the pool so far and reiterated that applications/nominations are still being collected.

Co-Chair McGuire adjourned the meeting at 7:56pm.