

Superintendent's Community Advisory Committee on Investing in Educational Excellence

Meeting #6

October 13, 2005, 7:30-9:30 a.m.
John Stanford Center Auditorium

Welcome

The co-chairs gave an update of their briefing to the School Board earlier in the week, during which they reviewed the work of the committee, its structure, charter, timeline, revenue, and community engagement initiatives. The Board had no questions and gave a very favorable response to the effort put forth by the committee.

Community Subcommittee

There has been terrific public engagement. Events have been well attended and diverse. There will be six focus groups this week and two more next week. By the end of the information gathering process, the committee will have dedicated 22 hours to hearing from the public.

Key learnings from the focus groups included the perception that teacher quality is the number one driver of student success, closely followed by class size and school principal leadership. Other areas mentioned include strategic vision at the school and administrative level and school choice. The high school student group said they wanted a more rigorous curriculum.

There was general consensus from the focus group participants that putting high school students on Metro would work well, but transportation for lower grades should be maintained as is.

There was discussion about the benefits of conversing with many other groups about the committee's recommendations, such as SEA and the unions.

Timeline of Committee's Work

The Superintendent is aware that if the committee doesn't have the information it needs to keep with the current timeline, he will be prepared to ask the committee to commit to additional time. However, the committee is recommending no more than a two-month extension.

Pre-Kindergarten

Discussion mentioned a large body of research that pre-kindergarten student preparation is critical. Because the research is so clear, the city's Families and Ed Levy devoted a large percentage of funds for pre-kindergarten programs. Pre-K is an equalizer that prepares students to start school at the same level. It is also shown by this research that it is *after* children of equal levels enter school that the gap develops.

Academic Subcommittee

This group is trying to identify what the plan is so the committee can recommend funding. The challenge is that the academic plan is written towards the Five-Year Plan with a heavy emphasis on the 05-06 school year. Through this review, it has become clear that teachers have to understand what and how they are teaching—if they don't have skills, the other parts of the plan don't matter.

What's missing is what's above the Five-Year Plan. There was discussion about the committee making recommendations about leadership on several levels. The academic plan is very detailed and not strategic enough. The tasks that are embedded in the plan are right on. The subcommittee intends to put in layman's terms what the tactics are trying to accomplish.

Finance Subcommittee

This group has finished the bulk of its data review and beginning the analysis and preliminary recommendation state. Some early, working proposals will be surfaced at the November 1 community meeting as a means of soliciting feedback from the public. .

Governance Systems

Monte Bridges provided an overview of school district governance structures with a view towards getting to strategic, sustainable governance practices. He recommended that we be clear in our report that sound governance structure is the context that will sustain all the strategic and tactical work. There are several nearby school districts working on optimizing their governance structures at this time. The committee agrees there is a need to recommend governance structural changes.

Final Recommended Format

Committee members reviewed a draft outline for the final report. An updated version will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Adjournment

The next meeting is in two weeks on Thursday, October 27, 7:30 a.m., at the John Stanford Center.