



**ESSA Task Force Meeting #11
June 5, 2018 at 6:00 PM
441 4th Street, NW, 1117
Washington, DC 20001**

Minutes

ESSA Task Force Members:

Present:

Lannette Woodruff (Task Force Co-Chair and Ward 4 Representative, DC State Board of Education)
Josh Boots (Executive Director, EmpowerK12)
Samantha Brown (Special Education and Reading Teacher, Calvin Coolidge High School)
Yolanda Corbett (Co-Chair, Parent Advocate Leaders Group)
Deborah Dantzer Williams (Head of School, Inspired Teaching Public Charter School)
Dan Davis (Student Advocate, State Board of Education)
Hannah Dunn (Student at Wilson High School)
Laura Fuchs (WTU Board Member and Teacher, HD Woodson High School)
Anne Herr (Parent and Director of School Quality, FOCUS)
Erica Hwang (Instructional Coach, Brightwood Education Campus)
Erin Kupferberg (Senior Manager of School Quality and Accountability, DC Public Charter School Board)
Maya Martin (Executive Director, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)
Jacque Patterson (Chief Community Engagement and Growth Officer, KIPP DC)
Elizabeth Primas (ESSA Program Manager, National Newspaper Publishers Association)
Daniel Rodriguez (Student, Benjamin Banneker High School)
Alex Rose-Henig (Dean of Students, BASIS DC)
Sheila Strain-Clark (Parent and Chief of Programs, Sasha Bruce Youthwork)
Joe Weedon (Ward 6 Representative, DC State Board of Education)
Suzanne Wells (Founder, Capitol Hill Public Schools Parent Organization)
Shana Young (Chief of Staff, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)

Phone:

Allyson Criner Brown (Ward 7 Education Council Member and Associate Director, Teaching for Change)
Ramona Edelin (Executive Director, DC Association of Chartered Public Schools)

Absent:

Donald Hense (Chairman, Friendship Public Charter Schools)
Juliana Herman (Deputy Chief of Policy, DC Public Schools)
Jack Jacobson (Vice President and Ward 2 Representative, State Board of Education)
Richard Pohlman (Executive Director, Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School)
Jhonna Turner (Parent Engagement Program Coordinator, Washington Lawyers' Committee)
Karen Williams (President and Ward 7 Representative, DC State Board of Education)

Presenters:



Monica Almond (Senior Associate for Policy Development and Government Relations, Alliance for Excellent Education)

Donna Johnson (Director of Accountability, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)

Mary Levy (Education Researcher)

Justin Tooley (Special Assistant for Legislation and Policy, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)

Naomi Watson (Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)

Betsy Wolf (Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins University)

Chloe Woodward-Magrane (Interim Director of Communications, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)

SBOE Staff:

Miguel Agüero, Staff Assistant

Dyvor Gibson, Administrative Support Specialist

Matt Repka, Policy Analyst

Maria Saliccioli, Senior Policy Analyst

Executive Summary

Dr. Woodruff welcomed ESSA Task Force (TF) members to the eleventh ESSA Task Force meeting. The meeting opened with a presentation from the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) on the state report card design and their ongoing efforts in support of measuring and improving school climate and access to opportunity. After OSSE's presentation, TF members broke into their subcommittees for discussion and presentations. The **Leadership** and **School Resources and Funding Equity** subcommittees heard presentations on school budgets and leadership from Dr. Wolf, Ms. Levy, and Mr. Paterson, and the **Academic Rigor** subcommittee heard a presentation from Dr. Almond, while the **School Environment** subcommittee spent the entire breakout in discussion. The subcommittees came back together afterwards, and a representative of each group reported the substance of the presentations or the content of their discussion to the whole group. Following the report out, Dr. Woodruff adjourned the TF for summer recess, noting that they would reconvene in September 2018.

Agenda Items

Welcome

Dr. Woodruff welcomed the TF members to the meeting. She provided an overview of the agenda: OSSE would give a final update on the state report card's design, after which Dr. Woodruff would ask the TF to look over the list of "wish list" and "must have" items they generated when brainstorming about an ideal state report card in the fall. TF members would have an opportunity to compare their ideal version to the final product and see how much progress had been made, keeping in mind that ESSA is a living document. The TF would then break out into committees. After finishing the meeting overview, Dr. Woodruff then introduced representatives from OSSE and invited them to provide their final update on state report card design engagement.

Final Update: Report Card Design Feedback

Ms. Woodward-Magrane reminded the TF that in May OSSE had shared layout and engagement updates up to that point, and the engagement efforts had ended in May. She said she would use her time to share



what OSSE had heard and discuss next steps. She thanked the TF for their help in engaging 1205 community members through the second phase of engagement and reminded the TF that this was the first time OSSE had engaged in such far-reaching feedback gathering. OSSE also held a separate session on the STAR rating page. Ms. Woodward-Magrane noted that OSSE was excited about receiving responses from across the city. Their takeaways were that the report card is on the right track.

OSSE asked what stakeholders wanted to be able to compare across schools, and they compiled the top 10 metrics people wanted to compare. The results were:

- School Programs
- Teacher Information
- Before and After School Care
- PARCC Scores
- Extracurricular Activities
- Grades Served
- School Safety and Discipline
- Student Enrollment
- STAR Rating
- College and Career Readiness

For each page, 59 – 67% of respondents said the information matched their expectations. On the page that explained the STAR framework, 53% of respondents saw what they expected to see, which was in line with OSSE’s expectations, knowing that they need to do more work to explain the STAR framework to families.

OSSE presented the following themes that emerged from the constructive feedback they received:

- Some commenters felt that the STAR Rating should not be located in the header of the report card.
- Several commenters expressed that the Overview section on the School Profile contained too much information, felt cluttered or didn’t feel organized correctly.
- Similar to the “Overview” section, some commenters thought that the items included in School Environment felt confusing or were too numerous.
- Some commenters expressed interest in seeing demographic information more prominently displayed on the School Profile page.
- More explanatory information or definitions. We are excited to engage with parents in June to develop clear language throughout the report card.

Ms. Woodward-Magrane said they were not surprised to hear that people wanted more information about what the terms meant, and they planned to work on ways to provide that information to families in the near future. TF members asked clarifying questions about the metrics that would be in the final report card, and Ms. Johnson said that as OSSE thinks about report card design, there are nuances about how things can be compared and filtered, so that is still being finalized through mockups and feedback. The final product will also be informed by the language phase of engagement, which will help OSSE understand what is most meaningful to families and will help them ascertain the ideal role of the website that will hold the school report card. Ms. Johnson added that people must be educated about the new tools that are available, the variety of ways they can be used, how and why they are important, and why they matter.

Ms. Woodward-Magrane moved on to next steps: through the end of June, OSSE will continue hosting small discussion groups on language in partnership with the aforementioned organizations, and they are open to hosting more sessions. She anticipated OSSE would hold 15-20 discussions through June in partnership with the CBOs they have been working with: Higher Achievement, the Children’s Law Center, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE), the Fishing School, and the Latin American Youth Center. She said that these organizations have been partners through the entire report card creation process



since 2017. A TF member asked to be informed about the language sessions, and Ms. Woodward-Magrane said she would share them with Ms. Salciccioli, who would give them to TF members.

Mr. Tooley then began an update on OSSE's progress toward its commitments in the ESSA state plan. OSSE had indicated the following: *Because we are committed to the importance of school climate work and to exploring this measure, OSSE also plans to begin an opt-in program with LEAs and schools who are interested in piloting a school survey for possible future use in the accountability framework.*

The commitment to pilot school surveys for possible future use in the accountability framework has started; OSSE began inventory on the climate instruments that are currently in use, and they provided a report on the [US Department of Education School Climate Surveys \(EDSCLS\)](#) to the DC Council. OSSE plans to monitor the tools and results, since each survey has different questions and has been shared with different audiences. Ms. Johnson added that DC's state ESSA plan included a commitment to test a metric called "access to opportunities." Its goal is to promote well-rounded experiences for students in engaging learning environments. Testing the metric will entail talking to LEAs about collecting more data and adopting measures that will achieve the high-level goal. Ms. Young said that if it was necessary to add a metric to the report card, OSSE would propose that the report card return to the State Board for approval.

Ms. Johnson said that any access to opportunities survey must be able to be disaggregated at the subgroup level, allow OSSE to measure meaningful differentiation, and be valid, reliable, comparable, and able to be implemented statewide across grade spans. Surveys must also take into account the administrative burden to the SEA, LEA, and school; the time it would take to set up data collection; ability to verify, audit, and monitor to ensure data is valid, reliable, and comparable; and whether they can balance the need for access to opportunities with schools' and LEAs' autonomy.

Ms. Johnson said that OSSE was exploring collecting data on a variety of academic experiences. The next steps are to review best practices on similar models, meet with LEA data leads to review available data, review potential methodologies, and bring updated information, including models to pilot, to the September ESSA Task Force meeting. Ms. Young said OSSE was not setting a time-bound commitment, but they were acknowledging they would move forward on examining and making information public without a specific commitment and point value. TF members asked clarifying questions and provided advice on the surveys, and OSSE representatives thanked them for the feedback and said that there was another year of work yet to come.

Recap of Wish List and Must Have Items

Dr. Woodruff said she wanted to go over the potential report card items that TF members deemed wish list-worthy or must-have during the first TF meeting. She noted that 37 of the must-have items, a significant majority, ended up on the report card, and she added that many of the others remain possibilities for the future. Dr. Woodruff highlighted items that were important to the TF but did not make it onto the upcoming report card - student-teacher ratios, the number of teachers at a school who have received trauma training, the number of multilingual teachers and staff at each school, and principals' years of teaching experience. She said she hoped to continue the discussions on these items as the TF moved into the next year. While some items did not make it onto the first report card, she asked TF members to remember that the report card will be a fluid document that can be changed. TF members can continue to make recommendations that will improve the way underserved children are supported. Dr. Woodruff said that OSSE has heard the TF members' input and perceptions, and while the TF might not see all of their wish list and must have items on the first report card, they must remember that the report card is a living document. The items served as a starting point for the TF's conversations about the content on the state report card.



Committee Breakout

The **Leadership** and **School Resources and Funding Equity** subcommittees combined to listen to two presentations that were relevant to both groups; one from education budget specialists and one from a leadership specialist. Dr. Wolf and Ms. Levy opened their presentation on the District of Columbia public Schools (DCPS) budget by introducing themselves – Dr. Wolf is an education researcher and DCPS parent, and Ms. Levy has studied the DC education system for 38 years. Dr. Wolf said that she was the most recent PTA president at Amidon-Bowen, and when the school received its 2017-18 budget, they realized that five staff members had been cut from their budget, so she started examining funding to understand why. DCPS uses a comprehensive staffing model based on the projected enrollment of a school, and they use a second formula to count the hours of work needed in children’s Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Special education staff members are allocated based on those hours. There are other formulas that determine how much money schools receive in at-risk, Title I, and Title II funds, but even after examining these funding streams, Dr. Wolf found that some schools still employ staff members using funds she could not identify. She acknowledged that while her analysis might seem critical of DCPS, it is only because their data is available, whereas charter schools have not provided sufficient workable data to allow similar analyses.

Dr. Wolf shared a graph she created based on Councilmember Grosso’s dataset that demonstrated how much additional money schools would receive if they were allowed to use their at-risk funds to supplement rather than to supplant. The amounts were much higher for high-need schools; Dr. Wolf noted that the more at-risk funds a school is allocated, the more potential there is for LEA-required misuse. She explained that this is a problem from an education evaluation standpoint – research has proven that it is important to invest in instruction to narrow the achievement gap. Instruction is not being supplemented when at-risk funds have to go toward social workers and custodians. Her next graph showed how much schools are spending on instructional staff; there is slightly more money being spent on teachers in wards 7 and 8, but some are receiving less per-pupil funding (PPF) on instruction than more affluent schools. She said that DCPS does a good job of allocating funds to middle schools equitably, as seen by the fact that Kramer Middle School (a low performing school) receives significantly higher PPF than Deal and Hardy Middle Schools (higher performing schools) do.

Ms. Levy projected a graph on general education spending after filtering out funds spent on special education, English language learners, at-risk, and Title I. Across DCPS schools, there are very different proportions of students who require these services. Filtering out special needs money leaves the funds available for general education; she said that in a perfect system where all special needs were addressed, general education would have similar PPF at each school. A factor that must be built in, however, is school size; small schools typically need higher PPF for general education. A minimal program at a small school still might require more staff. She presented a chart that showed two high-poverty schools east of the river, Beers and Stanton, with their enrollment and percent of at-risk students, as well as their PPF for general education. She compared them to schools with a similar size and lower at-risk percentages, noting that these wealthier schools receive higher PPF for general education. She reiterated Dr. Wolf’s point that DCPS’ spending for middle schools makes more sense, but she said there are some issues with high school spending, too. Ms. Levy pointed out further inconsistencies in schools that are near one another but funded differently - Malcolm X has roughly \$1500 less than Savoy in PPF despite similar percentages of at-risk students and enrollment.

Ms. Levy shared a link to the data she and Dr. Wolf used, as well as their contact information. A TF member asked about policy recommendations, and Dr. Wolf said one solution would be keeping the comprehensive staffing model as it stands while ensuring that at-risk money could be spent as legally intended. This would



require more money, so the mayor would have to allocate more money or DCPS would have to reallocate existing funds.

Mr. Paterson then spoke about leadership in schools. He introduced himself as a school leader, parent, and ward 8 resident. As a school leader, he had grappled with the question of how to transfer leadership from the typical roles in schools – principals, teacher’s union members, and others – to the people who are most affected by schools: parents. As he worked at LEAs, he thought carefully about how best to hear what parents have to say. He worked with a group of 10 charter and 10 DCPS principals in a program at Georgetown University, and he found that his colleagues had experienced similar issues in trying to imbue decisions with the parent voice. They decided to organize parents around issues and create parent leaders, using their own methods and taking into account charters’ autonomy. Mr. Paterson shared that through his work with Rocketship, where he worked recently, and Ludlow-Taylor, where his children are students, they facilitated meetings with parents on the issues that are plaguing them, and then they trained parents, who have opinions they may not know how to articulate to those in power. The group of principals talked about how to train parents to testify on specific issues, using small groups to figure out who might want to testify and who might want to support the work behind the scenes. They mobilized these parents; not just through surveys and speaking on demand, but understanding and leading conversations with other parents. Mr. Paterson said that training parents on ESSA is critical to changing the dynamic of leadership and having the type of equity that DC residents desire.

The **Academic Rigor** subcommittee heard a presentation from Dr. Almond on national best practices in academic rigor, with an emphasis on those practices that might be successful in DC. Dr. Almond opened with four key questions:

- What challenges need to be addressed?
- What is the state’s vision for college and career readiness?
- What are other states doing to get at academic rigor?
- What does the research show is working for historically underserved student populations?

She pointed the TF toward other states’ work to determine the characteristics of their graduates, like Virginia’s [Profile of a Graduate](#). She then laid out four strategies for increasing rigor: instituting high-quality early warning indicator systems, focusing on social and emotional learning (SEL), college and career pathways, and dual enrollment/early college high schools. Early warning indicator systems can start in 3rd grade – if students are not reading on grade level at that point, research has shown that educators should intervene to ensure the student does not fall dramatically behind. Other early warning systems can start in 6th or 9th grade, looking for red flags with students’ attendance, behavior, or coursework. Two or more behavior infractions, chronic absenteeism, and failing English or math in 6th – 9th grade have all been shown to threaten students’ progress toward graduation. Dr. Almond then pointed to evidence that SEL, college and career pathways, and dual enrollment/early college high schools lead to better outcomes, particularly for students of color.

TF members then asked Dr. Almond for recommendations, and she suggested implementing multiple pathways to graduation, asking school leaders about their vision, their approach to college readiness, and their thoughts about [PARCC](#) and testing procedures, and asking what parents think academic rigor looks like and what they see as important for their children.

The **School Environment** subcommittee met with Dr. Woodruff to review their journey from identifying three focus areas to narrowing in on access to opportunities. They reviewed the list of potential metrics OSSE had identified as candidates for inclusion on the access to opportunities survey, and they considered



additional metrics that should be part of access to opportunities, including field trips and expeditionary learning. Dr. Woodruff and the subcommittee members decided that these opportunities are not available for all schools and LEAs, and they are difficult to quantify. A TF member said that OSSE did not provide sufficient information on the proposed access to opportunities measure, and he suggested that the subcommittee take one of two routes: pressure OSSE to provide more information and guidance or position itself to serve in a parent outreach capacity and support OSSE's work. Dr. Woodruff suggested that the report card could eventually feature access to opportunities, and the subcommittee members thought the access to opportunities part of the report card should include teachers', parents', and students' input on what the metric should mean. Subcommittee members suggested that the TF could reach out to schools and parents to get their input on access to opportunities and encourage OSSE to make the process more collaborative.

Committee Report Out

The committees reconvened, and Dr. Woodruff asked each group to report what they had discussed and learned. Dr. Primas shared on behalf of **School Resources and Funding Equity** – she thanked Ms. Levy and Dr. Wolf and shared her appreciation for the fact that their work put a spotlight on funding inequity. Ms. Corbett thanked Mr. Paterson for speaking to the **Leadership** subcommittee's focus area and highlighting the importance of creating parent leaders and pursuing equity by amplifying their voices.

Mr. Rose-Henig said that the **School Environment** subcommittee had decided to ask OSSE to do the following, related to access to opportunity, at the September TF meeting:

- Share the final list of topics that would be considered as part of access to opportunities
- Share the feedback they received from conversations with LEAs' data managers on access to opportunities from data manager, on access to opportunities.
- Remain open to feedback on the access to opportunities measure
- Seek feedback beyond the school level and leverage the TF's ability to convene families and gather feedback

Ms. Dunn said the Academic Rigor subcommittee had enjoyed Dr. Almond's presentation on effective measures to improve academic rigor in schools, as well as the information she provided on CTE, career pathways, and SEL. Mr. Rodriguez added that Dr. Almond had spoken about the importance of early warning systems, such as interventions tied to the results of third grade reading assessments, as a lever for academic rigor. She impressed upon the committee members the potential for that data to help students achieve in rigorous environments.

Next Steps and Adjourn

Dr. Woodruff thanked TF members and asked them to take a group picture to commemorate the end of their first year of work together. After the picture was taken, Dr. Woodruff adjourned the meeting.

The TF will meet again in September 2018; the date and time have yet to be decided but will be made publicly available on the SBOE website once they have been confirmed.