



**ESSA Task Force Meeting #8
March 6, 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)
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)
Juliana Herman (Deputy Chief of Policy, DC Public Schools)
Erica Hwang (Instructional Coach, Brightwood Education Campus)
Jack Jacobson (Vice President and Ward 2 Representative, State Board of Education)
Erin Kupferberg (Senior Manager of School Quality and Accountability, DC Public Charter School Board)
Jacque Patterson (DC Regional Director, Rocketship Public Schools)
Elizabeth Primas (ESSA Program Manager, National Newspaper Publishers Association)
Alex Rose-Henig (Dean of Students, BASIS DC)
Sheila Strain-Clark (Parent and Chief of Programs, Sasha Bruce Youthwork)
Jhonna Turner (Parent Engagement Program Coordinator, Washington Lawyers' Committee)
Joe Weedon (Ward 6 Representative, DC State Board of Education)
Suzanne Wells (Founder, Capitol Hill Public Schools Parent Organization)
Karen Williams (President and Ward 7 Representative, DC State Board of Education)

Phone:

Allyson Criner Brown (Ward 7 Education Council Member and Associate Director, Teaching for Change)
Anne Herr (Parent and Director of School Quality, FOCUS)
Maya Martin (Executive Director, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)

Absent:

Yolanda Corbett (Co-Chair, Parent Advocate Leaders Group)
Deborah Dantzer Williams (Head of School, Inspired Teaching Public Charter School)
Ramona Edelin (Executive Director, DC Association of Chartered Public Schools)
Donald Hense (Chairman, Friendship Public Charter Schools)
Richard Pohlman (Executive Director, Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School)
Daniel Rodriguez (Student, Benjamin Banneker High School)
Shana Young (Chief of Staff, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)



Presenters:

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

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

SBOE Staff:

John-Paul Hayworth, Executive Director

Paul Negron, Public Affairs Specialist

Abby Ragan, Policy Fellow

Matt Repka, Policy Analyst

Maria Saliccioli, Senior Policy Analyst

Executive Summary

Dr. Woodruff welcomed Task Force (TF) members to the eighth ESSA Task Force meeting. Representatives from the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) opened the meeting by sharing the report card mockup website, which represents the first step in designing the report card. TF members worked independently and in small groups to provide feedback on the draft report card. After this presentation, TF members engaged in a conversation about their work on a shared definition of equity. Following this conversation, the TF was adjourned until April 3, 2018.

Agenda Items

Welcome

Dr. Woodruff welcomed task force members to the meeting and thanked them for their time. She told the group that when her son was auditioning for Duke Ellington, she realized that it would be a positive thing if the TF could help schools realize the drawback of pulling students out of class. She informed the TF that OSSE staff would be presenting on the draft layout for the upcoming school report card, and she introduced Ms. Woodward-Magrane and Mr. Tooley.

School Report Card Design Testing

Ms. Woodward-Magrane informed the TF that OSSE had moved into the design phase of the report card development process, and she said she looked forward to the TF's feedback. She presented an agenda:

- Reminder: why we're here
- Overview of engagement strategy
- Help us create our engagement questions
- Feedback discussion

Ms. Woodward-Magrane said that the bulk of the conversation would focus on draft mockups OSSE hoped to bring in front of the community by April. OSSE's goal was to select the right questions for the engagement activity and gather TF members' feedback and questions about their approach. Ms.



Woodward-Magrane added that parents have not typically been report cards' final audience, but OSSE was hoping to change that and was eager to have the TF's help to change their approach.

Ms. Woodward-Magrane provided an overview of the engagement timeline, ending in July, and Mr. Tooley said OSSE learned a lot about asking the right questions and empowering stakeholders while undertaking the content phase of the report card engagement process. He said that OSSE hoped to continue along a path that was locally-led, expert-informed, feedback-driven, ongoing, and sustainable. He added that the TF had provided initial feedback during the last meeting on the report card's layout, navigation, layout, and style priorities. OSSE had summarized the feedback they received from TF members, and they had learned from the TF that a report card written in a parent-friendly voice was critical, and language, layout, and style should be clear and easy to read. Mr. Tooley added that the evening's presentation would focus mostly on layout. Ms. Woodward-Magrane said OSSE planned to focus most of their engagement efforts during this phase on language and layout, which was consistent with TF members' suggestions. Mr. Tooley added that OSSE had learned that engagement materials should be more streamlined, and they should make it easier for stakeholders who held community meetings or focus groups to send feedback back to OSSE.

OSSE's partner in creating the report card is Tembo, an organization with national expertise that is also familiar with the DC education landscape. Ms. Woodward-Magrane noted that the firm is very focused on what works best for parents and has done extensive user testing in other contexts that will inform their work. She said that Tembo and OSSE would create an online survey to gather feedback on the report card that groups could complete together or individuals could do complete alone. She added that OSSE would also conduct significant in-person engagement to ensure that a broad swath of stakeholders could weigh in on the report card's design. Ms. Woodward-Magrane said that while language engagement would be the last part of the process, it is not because it was not extremely important; rather, it is because the report card tool has to be built before OSSE can finalize language.

OSSE plans to be more involved with language than with layout and data visualization, so while the TF and other stakeholders will help engage on data visualization, OSSE leadership anticipates more hands-on involvement for language. They plan to host a series of small focus groups with community partners to test whether terms are parent-friendly and translations are accurate. Ms. Herman wondered whether there would be an opportunity for local education agencies (LEAs) like DCPS to contribute to visualization preferences. Ms. Woodward-Magrane said that those voices definitely would be heard and that she would be happy to connect offline on the matter.

TF members also asked:

- How layout would precede language, and whether descriptive language would also contain context. For example, would the report cards show what 75% in-seat attendance really meant and whether this was a positive or negative trend?
 - Mr. Tooley responded that they would be thoughtful in providing reference points, but they would not provide individualized context on each school.
 - The TF member responded that because schools are not all the same and there needs to be a fair way to provide context. Ms. Woodward-Magrane responded that they would demonstrate context with trend graphs to show change over time and through citywide comparison graphs.



- Whether the content SBOE had approved was the same list of fields the TF had seen at the January TF meeting.
 - Mr. Tooley responded that it was.
- Whether it would be difficult to complete family engagement during June and July, when students were not in school.
 - Ms. Woodward-Magrane said that this timeline was not ideal, but they were bound to deliverable dates in order to produce the report card on time. Mr. Tooley added that engagement for the areas which they felt would require the greatest amount of family input, layout and data visualization, would take place before summer break.
- Whether the pages were in the order that OSSE had intended them to be in.
 - Ms. Woodward-Magrane responded that they were.
- Which decisions had already been made?
 - Ms. Woodward-Magrane said that the layout was purely a draft at this point, but the content had already been decided by the SBOE vote.

Ms. Woodward-Magrane and Mr. Tooley passed out an un-styled mockup of the report card website and asked for TF members' feedback on it. Ms. Woodward-Magrane added that OSSE was particularly interested in feedback like the question around descriptive language, and she asked that the TF provide that type of written feedback for the OSSE report card team. They hoped to learn which information points were most and least relevant, so they could use that information to place data points relative to one another.

The TF split into small groups to react to the draft layout while Mr. Tooley and Ms. Woodward-Magrane circulated to answer questions. TF members gave written feedback on key sections of the draft report card – school offerings, school environment, performance summary, and student achievement.

After TF members had time to react, Ms. Woodward-Magrane asked if they had feedback they wanted to share. TF members responded that:

- Schools' STAR ratings stood out immediately, and a TF member felt that it might not be best to lead with these ratings. She added that, as a parent, she was more interested in school growth, and she worried that the prominence of these ratings would stop families from seeing schools' other strengths.
- A TF member asked who calculated the STAR ratings, and Ms. Woodward-Magrane explained that they come from the STAR Framework that is part of the State Accountability Plan required by federal law. Mr. Tooley said the details of this framework could be found in TF members' binders.
- Another TF member suggested that OSSE create a simple, clear graphic on each page that explained the components of each metric and how well a school scored out of the total number of possible points.
- One TF member asked to see OSSE's explanation of how STAR ratings are calculated, and Ms. Woodward-Magrane said OSSE was still developing it, and that they were trying to balance presenting the detailed formula with parent-friendliness. She expressed interest in visualizing the information.
- Another TF member suggested that DCPS would like to weigh in on the report card.
- One TF member asked why school finance data was positioned prominently, and he suggested creating a school administration tab that included leadership and financial information.



- A TF member said that it was critical to present principal turnover data on the report card, but Ms. Woodward-Magrane explained that no additional data points would be added beyond those approved by the SBOE.
- Another TF member pointed out that principal information was not on the first page, but PTO/PTA information was; Ms. Woodward-Magrane explained that they would try to make it easier to find principal information, but PTO/PTA information was placed prominently in response to community feedback.
- A TF member said that parents would like to hear more about subjects other than reading and math and community partnerships like DC Scores and Live It Learn It. Ms. Woodward-Magrane explained that these community partnerships would be listed under the School Offerings section, but academic subjects beyond math, reading, and science were not on the content proposal, and thus would not be on the final report card.
- One TF member asked whether OSSE planned to present data disaggregated by race and gender. Ms. Woodward-Magrane said they would, and they planned to ask for parent feedback on how to present these data.
- A TF member said that data on subgroup achievement can be depressing, and because the report card is not a research paper, it might not be best to present data disaggregated by subgroups. Another TF member disagreed with this assessment and said that many parents wanted to know this information for kids who are like theirs. He added that policymakers are one of the intended report card audiences, and they do need this information.
- Another TF member asked if the student achievement section could include pre-K achievement data, such as CLASS data. Ms. Woodward-Magrane said that OSSE could make a decision about this, and she hoped the TF member would record this suggestion. The TF member then suggested that the report cards present 8th to 9th grade promotion rates in the future.
- One TF member asked for a character count for the amount of information schools could submit for their Points of Pride, an open response section. Ms. Woodward-Magrane said the field would tentatively allow 1000 characters.
- One TF member asked if the report card would show AP course pass rates. Ms. Woodward-Magrane said that while the report card did have that information, the fact that it wasn't where the TF member expected to see it should be recorded and OSSE should address it. Another TF added that the report card did not share the list of AP classes offered, and the other TF member agreed this was an oversight.

Mr. Tooley called TF members' attention to the fact that PARCC and MSAA data must be on the report card, but OSSE did not want to bury alternative assessment data. He asked for their feedback on how to present those data points so that families could find them easily.

Mr. Tooley reminded TF members to record any questions that they believed OSSE should ask parents about the report card. After the question and answer period concluded, Ms. Woodward-Magrane said that materials would be ready by the end of March and they hoped TF members could host meetings in April. She added that OSSE needed at least a week to provide childcare where requested, and she said that OSSE would be able to provide food for meetings. She shared that OSSE's engagement goal for this stage of the report card is 1200 stakeholders. Ms. Woodward-Magrane reminded the TF that report card design engagement would be designed to take 20 - 30 minutes, as previously promised. She added that no other state is building its report card with such a high level of community engagement.



Equity Discussion

Ms. Saliccioli read the new draft equity definition, and Dr. Woodruff asked TF members for their feedback. A TF member said that DC does not monitor student progress by some of the subgroup categories listed in the definition, and it would not be possible to track these students' progress as a group. Another TF member said that students, inclusive of these groups, are being supported. She moved that immigration status, rather than citizenship, be included as part of the definition. One TF member said that there was a longer list of categories that one of her colleagues had suggested adding to the first paragraph from DC human rights law.

A TF member asked why it was necessary to have language about categories of students that the District will support if the definition also states that every student will receive support. She added that the earlier comment about additional protected categories highlighted groups of students who were not included in the definition. Another TF member agreed with this suggestion, saying that it would be impossible to include every subgroup, and several TF members supported these points. However, one TF member said that without language addressing specific groups of students, the TF would gloss over the equity component of the definition. She said it was worth noting particular groups of students that deserved additional focus, even if the city would not collect data on all of these groups. A TF member asked about including categories of protected student groups as a footnote that could provide more detail. Another TF member said it felt strange to have a conversation about inequities without calling attention to core aspects of historical inequities in the definition.

One TF member suggested that the definition guarantee support toward success for student populations that have not been historically represented. He said this would mean that the city's monitoring efforts would be undertaken in the spirit of supporting underserved students without attempting to make a comprehensive list. He added he understood that the equity definition was important but was struggling to understand how the TF would use it. He wondered if the definition would be used as part of the TF's bylaws and how perfect it needed to be. Dr. Woodruff said it would not be perfect, but it was necessary to have a shared understanding each TF members could use to every action related to the ESSA plan. She added that she wanted the definition to come from the TF members, all of who have areas of expertise. Because equity is integral to ESSA, the TF would not be doing what ESSA intended if it did not create an equity definition. She said the TF could decide whether to simply address the issues written in DC's ESSA plan or to go further with their recommendations, but regardless of the scope of their undertaking, it would not make sense to break into committees if the TF did not have an understanding of where they would go with the work.

A TF member said she was perplexed because she had read that some colleges are eschewing racial preferences as part of their admissions criteria, and she wondered whether naming specific groups of students would be seen as giving them an unfair preference. A TF member responded that federal law calls for subgroup reporting and accountability for racial subgroups, and that providing subgroup monitoring and support is an established principle in K-12 education, unlike in higher education. She felt that equity is a core component of ESSA. A TF member pointed out that some categories in the TF's equity definition, such as religion, are not part of ESSA. Another TF member responded that DC law goes further with anti-discrimination law than the federal government has been willing to go, adding that DC is a sanctuary city. She added that supporting students who fall into some of the categories mentioned in the equity definition is integral to DC's identity. Dr.



Woodruff said the definition should be specific to DC’s context rather than the federal context. She expressed a belief that before diving deeply into committee work, it was necessary to establish the purpose for the work and an understanding of the group’s definition of what it meant when it spoke about equity. A TF member asked how the group felt about adding a footnote to the definition listing subgroups, but there was not consensus around this idea. Dr. Woodruff said the TF would continue the conversation, but that she hoped to conclude it at the next meeting.

Next Steps and Adjournment

Dr. Woodruff circulated exit slips and asked TF members to fill them out and to share any additional feedback via email. She then adjourned the meeting.

The TF will meet again on Tuesday, April 3, 2018, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM at 441 4th Street NW, room 1117.