

High School Graduation Requirements Task Force Meeting #12
April 11, 2018 at 6:00 PM
441 4th Street NW, Room 1114
Washington, DC 20001

Minutes

Attendance:

HS Grad Task Force Members:

Present:

- **Markus Batchelor** (Task Force Co-Chair, State Board of Education, Ward 8)
- **Erin Bibo** (Deputy Chief, College & Career Programs)
- **Latisha Chisholm** (Special Education Coordinator, Anacostia High School)
- **Jerome Foster II** (Student, Washington Leadership Academy)
- **Larry Greenhill, Sr.** (Vice President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers)
- **Dwan Jordon** (Senior Advisor, Friendship PCS)
- **Sandra Jowers-Barber** (Director, Division of Humanities, University of the District of Columbia College)
- **Sanjay Mitchell** (Director of College & Alumni Programs, Thurgood Marshall Academy PCHS)
- **Carol Randolph** (Chief Operating Officer, DC Students Construction Trades Foundation)
- **Cathy Reilly** (Executive Director, Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators)
- **David Tansey** (Teacher, McKinley Technology High School)
- **Justin Tooley** (Special Assistant for Legislation & Policy, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)
- **Laura Wilson Phelan** (Task Force Co-Chair, State Board of Education, Ward 1)

Phone:

- **Julie Camerata** (Parent, DC International, Executive Director, DC Special Education Cooperative)
- **Jimell Sanders** (Parent, Houston Elementary School)

Absent:

- **Tom Brown** (Executive Director, Training Grounds, Inc.)
- **Celine Fejerman** (Deputy Director, Raise DC)
- **Cara Fuller** (Principal, Ballou STAY High School)
- **Cosby Hunt** (Teacher & Senior Officer of Teaching & Learning, Center for Inspired Teaching)
- **Kimberly Martin** (Principal, Wilson High School)
- **Shenita Ray** (Director of Online Operations, Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies)
- **Karla Reid-Witt** (Parent, Banneker High School)
- **Naomi Rubin DeVeaux** (Deputy Director, DC Public Charter School Board)

Also Present:

- **Laterica Quinn** (Senior Equity and Fidelity Specialist, DC Public Charter School Board)

SBOE Staff:

- **John-Paul Hayworth**, Executive Director
- **Dyvor Gibson**, Administrative Support Specialist
- **Paul Negron**, Public Affairs Specialist
- **Matt Repka**, Policy Analyst
- **Maria Salciccioli**, Senior Policy Analyst

Executive Summary:

Ms. Wilson Phelan and Mr. Batchelor convened members of the High School Graduation Requirements Task Force (TF) for their twelfth meeting. TF members engaged in an in-depth discussion on personalized learning plans (PLPs) and established some components the plans should have. After this conversation, TF members finalized the mastery language principles for math and world language. Ms. Wilson Phelan and Mr. Batchelor asked TF members to prepare to review report language and principles in advance of the next meeting and encouraged the TF to share any drafts with their communities.

Ms. Wilson Phelan and Mr. Batchelor then thanked TF members and adjourned until the thirteenth, and penultimate, meeting on April 25, 2018.

Welcome

Ms. Wilson Phelan welcomed High School Graduation Requirements Task Force (TF) members to the twelfth task force meeting and introduced Laterica “Teri” Quinn, who was filling in for Ms. Rubin DeVeaux. Ms. Quinn leads transcript audit at the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) and spearheads the summer graduation ceremony; each year, she audits each charter high school’s 12th grade records to ensure students are on track for graduation. If students are not on track for a spring graduation, she provides guidance to help students graduate that summer.

Ms. Wilson Phelan then reviewed the agenda: TF members would focus on wrapping up community service principles, finalizing the parameters for community service and mastery language, and identifying additional content for the report that will go to the SBOE for approval. If the report is approved, SBOE will send the report to OSSE and recommend that they adopt the TF members’ recommendations. Ms. Wilson Phelan noted that she welcomed volunteers who would help write parts of the report. She concluded by saying that if TF members have additional ideas that have not yet been suggested for inclusion in the report, she and Mr. Batchelor hoped to spend time capturing those thoughts over the course of the meeting.

Discussion: Personalized Learning Plans

Ms. Wilson Phelan said the group would spend most of their time that evening discussing PLPs, first in small groups, then as a whole group. She said that the TF members would review family engagement documents from Texas’ early intervention plan, a roadmap from the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) that outlined potential interventions DC could embed in its plans, and a summary from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) on each state’s version of PLPs. TF members split into two groups and discussed the parameters for DC’s proposed PLPs.

She said that each group would be given a worksheet to record their responses to a series of questions about the PLPs, and she asked that groups select a spokesperson to report out after the conversation. Ms. Wilson Phelan said that groups might decide against implementing PLPs, and if so, there was space on the worksheet to indicate why not. The questions were:

- Should we recommend changes to this language to include an earlier PLP for each student? If no, why? If yes, answer additional questions below.
- What do you envision these plans looking like? Tell the story (briefly) of what the student, parent and school experience should look like if these plans were implemented.
- At what grade should the first plan be completed? Why?
- What should the plan include? Should it include interventions that must be made when a student isn't meeting benchmarks?
- How should the development of these plans be enforced? Who should have that authority?
- What could keep these plans from becoming a "check box" exercise in compliance vs. a way to ensure every child is getting the support he/she need?
- What should the implementation timeline be?
- What additional considerations should we include in our report?

Mr. Batchelor reconvened the groups after a period of time to share what they had discussed.

Ms. Quinn said that her group had agreed that PLPs should start sooner rather than later and that schools and families should revisit them over multiple years. The group thought the first PLP conversation should take place in 4th grade using assessment data, and the review process should ask that teachers sit down with students to have conversations about their data and where they see themselves going in the future. The plans should then be re-evaluated after 6th grade, and should ask students about their career interests in tandem with the data review. There should be one more PLP conversation in 9th grade, and the meeting should address academic progress and career interests, including opportunities for students to receive hands-on career exposure through internships.

Ms. Quinn said her group was relatively charter-heavy, and they had decided that it would be ideal for PCSB to enforce the plans, although individual LEAs hold student transcripts. To avoid a "check box" exercise, Ms. Quinn and her group suggested that schools hold periodic check-ins with families, focusing on family engagement so parents are eager participants in student data conversations during 3rd or 4th grade, 6th grade, and 9th grade. Mr. Jordon added that, regarding the implementation timeline, he recommended that the plans should begin in school year 2019-20, and they should be created for all 4th grade students and should be piloted with some 6th and 9th grade students. He added that all 6th grade students should have plans by school 2021-22, and all 9th grade students should have plans in school year 2022-23.

Mr. Batchelor asked if there were strong minority opinions that were not part of this report-out, and Mr. Tansey said that they had debated whether plans should include social-emotional support and should be part of summer school, and whether it should be introduced as something mandatory. He added that it was necessary to consider the disproportionate burden on schools where nearly all students would require interventions, as opposed to others where the plans could just be a basic check-in. He thought the language should be written in a way that would not punish schools with low-performing students. Mr. Jordon added that there must be three different strategies for creating plans for students whose achievement is below-, on-, or above-grade level. Ms. Quinn said that there should be social-emotional components to the plans, particularly for older students.

Mr. Jordon said that Mr. Mitchell had shared that it would be important to consider the implications for students who receive a score of 1 or 2 on a [PARCC](#) exam. He asked how to ensure schools are putting necessary interventions in place, and he wondered what schools would be expected to do and what the best practices would be. Mr. Tansey added that family engagement should not be a check box – it is be critical to ensure families understand the implications of students' test scores and how necessary

interventions would be for below-level students. Mr. Jordon added that plans should also indicate whether students are on track for certifications and careers.

Ms. Reilly said that her group agreed plans should take place over several years, but in a slight variation of the other group's proposed parameters, they had identified 2nd, 6th, and 9th grade as the grade levels when schools and families should have in-depth conversations around the plans. She added that her group had not put emphasis on PARCC as the benchmark for student success, and because plans would start in 2nd grade, before students have taken PARCC exams, the conversation would focus on student mastery of basic skills and knowledge. She said the group had struggled over what belonged in policy and what should simply be practice – what is appropriate to put into policy, given that policies can backfire? Ms. Reilly said the group had a vision of what practice should look like, and they agreed the purpose was to loop the family in at an early age, when there is plenty of hope and possibility. Summer school in 2nd grade is not a big deal, she added, and there is less material to catch up on. She noted similarities between her group's ideas and the other group's thinking.

Ms. Reilly said the plans should start to look into graduation pathways in 6th grade, and there should be a menu of interventions. Policies cannot change every year, she said, and the group struggled with how interventions would be written. District residents who had been through previous iterations of plans would agree that plans would be painful if not accompanied with interventions, in Ms. Reilly's opinion. She said the burden cannot be solely on teachers, LEAs, or schools – responsibility for the PLPs must be shared. Policy is one piece of the solution, but there must be other dimensions.

Ms. Reilly concluded by saying that her group had not addressed timeline, but she liked the first group's timeline, calling it realistic. She added that plans could include a pilot, and if so, they should start in 2nd grade to bolster early childhood education. Her group liked Texas' plan but had not thought through the entire plan.

Dr. Bibo objected that her group had had concerns about Texas' plan, and Ms. Reilly had raised some of the important ones. Dr. Bibo paraphrased what Ms. Reilly and other group members had objected to – they wondered if the Texas model could produce 16-year-old 6th graders, but absent that, she realized there could be 16-year-old high school students who are at the appropriate grade level for their age but who are very far behind. Ms. Reilly said the potential for repeated failures was not the part she had liked about Texas' plan and she had seen overage elementary students when her own children were in school. She added that the PLPs were an attempt to bridge the gap between the two undesired outcomes Dr. Bibo had identified.

Ms. Wilson Phelan asked, during the second group's conversation on what should be policy or practice, if they had identified whether SBOE should propose plans for all 2nd graders as policy. Dr. Bibo said they had not gotten to that point in their discussion, and Ms. Reilly said that they had discussed including it as part of a 2nd, 6th, or 9th grade report card, noting that the group had not reached consensus. She was not sure if PCSB was comfortable with the idea, and she said it might be burdensome for DC Public Schools (DCPS) to manage PLPs because of its size. Ms. Wilson Phelan asked Dr. Bibo, with PLPs for all 2nd graders, what the implications would be at the system level – would it be possible, and would it advance the TF's desired outcomes of on-level high school students? Dr. Bibo said that Ms. Reilly had captured the group's conversation well, and she felt that the issues could be addressed with well-executed practices, and she did not think policy change would help the city reach its goals. The group had discussed equity and was concerned about implementation across schools. Dr. Bibo and Ms. Chisholm talked about the variation between their experiences as DCPS parents, and she added that policies are often implemented at different levels of fidelity.

Dr. Bibo asked how 2nd, 6th, and 9th grade requirements could all fit into high school graduation requirements, and she asked if she'd heard Ms. Wilson Phelan correctly that the recommendation to start the PLPs might be a separate action from changes to the requirements. She asked for more clarity on process and procedure moving forward and wondered what a pre-high school policy within the high school graduation requirement regulations would look like, and if that was the true topic of discussion. Ms. Wilson Phelan said she did not want to get caught up in the process, because SBOE would not craft specific regulatory text; OSSE has that authority. She added that if the TF feels the PLPs matter, the recommendations would go to OSSE, but OSSE would decide exactly where the recommendations would fit into regulations, policy, or guidance. She added that existing regulations have language about limiting social promotion that is relevant to the proposed PLP work, and that could be a fitting place to include a regulation on PLPs. Ms. Wilson Phelan added that this the policy prohibiting excessive social promotion is not implemented with fidelity or referenced often; she said it could possibly be reworked. She noted that the benefit of creating a policy, rather than encouraging a practice, is increased attention and resources. However, that would not guarantee the policy would be funded, and she acknowledged it could still become a 'check box' recommendation. She asked whether the TF wanted the PLPs to become a policy.

Ms. Chisholm said that she did not like the idea of recommending PLPs based on whether or not DCPS and PCSB think it is a reasonable idea; the TF should consider the data they have examined, current events, and their experiences, and they should use that information to determine what DC students need. She asked what data points are necessary to help evaluators understand if schools' practices are on track, and she said student needs should be the focus of the conversation when the TF thinks about whether or not to make policy recommendations. Ms. Chisholm added that, thinking about policy and equity, she worries that the bare minimum policy will be implemented at Kramer MS or Anacostia HS. She said that if something is really important and is not mandated, it will not be implemented, event at a basic level.

Mr. Tansey said, on the topic of PLP enforcement, thinking about plan enforcement, that he believed OSSE should maintain PLP records. His reasoning was that there is a disconnect in the District; education leaders are confused about why students are not graduating prepared, yet the city collects data – low PARCC scores, failing course grades, evidence of retention – that no one acts on before a student enrolls in high school. He added that he supports PLPs because he wants to know how many students need extra help early in their educational careers. He said PLP data need to be public, even if the PLPs themselves are housed at the LEA level, so the public knows that every student at Kramer MS needs a plan, for example. He added if all records are kept at individual schools, that level of transparency would not result. Mr. Tansey said he wants DC to acknowledge its equity issues and understand the concentration of need in certain parts of the city that makes in-house solutions untenable. He added that whether the District needs to offer extended years or extended days, there must be capacity to create change that goes beyond what is possible given the existing budgets and structures of schools. He suggested that the city could approach this goal by creating 6th grade PLPs that serve as a predictor of high school readiness. He would like to see this data shared publicly – e.g., after 6th grade at this school, only half of the students are on track to enter high school prepared. Mr. Tansey concluded that this strategy would create an opportunity for intervention, rather than allowing District leaders to simply say that a certain school has low PARCC scores.

Ms. Quinn said she was not opposed to writing the PLPs into policy, but she felt that too often, when a policy is in place, schools bear the burden of implementing it. She wondered whether the city would provide support, training, and resources, and she asked how to get buy-in, change school culture, and make the PLPs effective. Ms. Quinn said that if the PLPs become policy and generate new data that will allow District education leaders to identify schools that are underperforming, she was not sure what would happen next. She added that she could think of multiple LEAs that would respond to that type of negative attention by asking what PCSB wanted them to do differently and wondering how PCSB could

help them improve. Ms. Quinn worried that schools would perceive the plans as yet another onerous requirement. Dr. Jowers-Barber agreed with her assertion that policies needed to be accompanied by supports and resources, adding that this had come up in past TF meetings. Ms. Wilson Phelan said she heard TF members say that if the PLPs were mandated, they should be funded. Ms. Reilly said the TF is trying to trigger resources, rather than demonize schools, but she worries that identifying areas of difficulty would condemn schools as an unintended consequence. The TF hopes to trigger something more positive, she added, but that must be intentional; no one wants a policy that will bring people to say ‘this is a bad school, they didn’t teach the kids.’ She hoped instead for a policy that would spur positive change, like more at-risk funding. Ms. Reilly said that she had not yet thought of the idea approach, but it must be funded and trigger action instead of simply shame.

Mr. Jordon said that education in the District is funded well, but we are still doing a poor job of improving student learning. He said that the PLPs should help schools use funds more strategically, and he agreed with Ms. Chisholm that the PLP policy must be based on what the TF decides District students need, and there must be a major push behind the effort. He referred to Ms. Martin’s comments at the prior TF meeting about an effort she had overseen in Ohio. Ms. Martin had shared that she had overseen highly supportive student academies at her high school, and they had worked well, but ultimately they were expensive and unsustainable. Mr. Jordon added that he is not a budget expert, but he recognized that implementing PLPs would have multi-year implications. Ms. Wilson Phelan said that Ms. Saliccioli had taken notes on the conversation, and she proposed that as a next step, SBOE would create a document for TF members to react to before the next meeting. She added that this would also provide an opportunity for TF members to solicit community input. Ms. Wilson Phelan proposed starting this draft document in Google Docs, so that TF members could insert comments, make edits, and see one another’s feedback. She added that community input should be included there, too, and SBOE would remind TF members to add their feedback. She expressed a belief that this process would produce a solid draft that could be finalized at the next TF meeting.

Mastery and Community Service Language

Ms. Wilson Phelan asked TF members to refer to the draft community service and mastery language principles, specifying that she wanted to start the conversation on the proposed adjustments to world language and math mastery. She said these were supposed to be areas of consensus and asked if this reflected what they heard and what their communities wanted. She asked if anything should be changed in the first three bullets, which were:

- Students may receive credit for a high school math or world language course through demonstration of mastery of the equivalent standards in the course.
- These credits count toward the 24.0 required Carnegie Units
- Students are encouraged to enroll in higher-level math and language courses upon demonstrating mastery

Dr. Bibo said that DCPS central office staff had spent the last several weeks exploring these principles; DCPS cross-walked each proposal with their matrix on colleges’ admissions requirements. She found that several colleges that are popular with DC students require both years of world language to be in the same language. She said she realized that was not the issue under discussion, but DCPS staff are concerned about the world language mastery requirements, because they do not require that the two years must be in the same language. TF members who work at DCPS debated whether or not DCPS requires students to study the same language for two years. Dr. Bibo acknowledged the controversy around this proposed requirement, saying the argument that this would be difficult for special education students was particularly compelling. However, DCPS central office staff were still strongly in favor of requiring two years of the same language.

Mr. Mitchell said that Thurgood Marshall Academy (TMA) staff had discussed the proposed change to require two years of the same language, and they favored that idea, because the colleges that most often admit TMA students prefer continuity. They worried, however, that since some colleges require a language to graduate, those students who test out of world language in 9th grade might lose fluency by college, which could become a barrier to college graduation. Some TMA students who take Spanish through 11th grade still struggle with college Spanish courses. Mr. Mitchell concluded that requiring two years of the same language is more important to TMA staff than permitting students to demonstrate world language mastery. Ms. Wilson Phelan asked if people wanted the question of whether or not students could take their two world language credits in two different languages to be an LEA or state-level decision. Dr. Bibb and Mr. Mitchell agreed that it should be state policy, and the TF agreed not to change the existing regulation, which does not require that world language credits are in the same language. Ms. Reilly said that most people she had spoken to were in favor of the first three bullets. She wondered about Ms. Martin's question from the prior meeting - what would students do if they test out of courses and are not sitting in class? She said she didn't think many students would be affected, and Ms. Wilson Phelan said that that should be captured for the minority report.

Ms. Wilson Phelan then asked the TF to dive into the questions for discussion, which were:

- What are the parameters of our recommendations for student demonstration of mastery?
Some possibilities:
 - Students may demonstrate mastery of a course
 - **at any time** before, during, or after the course
 - **only before** enrolling in the course
 - before or after a course
 - for any part of the content material for a course, allowing them to focus their studies on elements for which they have not yet demonstrated mastery
 - Students may demonstrate mastery
 - by achieving 75% or higher on a State-approved assessment
 - through State-approved Universal Design for Learning assessment
 - other? (portfolios?)
- Who may offer and proctor the demonstration of mastery and approve the use of this measure?
 - LEAs
 - Schools
 - Individual teachers
 - OSSE
 - DME
 - An independent review board/panel (could be a subcommittee of the State Board of Education, for example)

She asked about the parameters for the recommendations, reminding the TF that they had discussed the timing for the recommendations and what qualifies as mastery. She asked if the TF wanted to take a stand on timing, which would be a bold implementation choice, but she wanted to allow TF members to make a decision. Should students be able to take a test only before a course, or should they be able to take mastery tests during a course or after it had concluded?

Ms. Reilly said the TF should discuss timing; to Mr. Mitchell's point, mastery tests should be completed during high school and should not be permitted during middle school. Ms. Chisholm agreed. Ms. Reilly said that if it should be done in high school from a college perspective, tests must also happen in high

school. Ms. Wilson Phelan said that Oyster Adams EC students take the AP Spanish exam in 8th grade – should that not be permitted? Ms. Chisholm said the issues were not connected, and Ms. Wilson Phelan said they were because she had given an example of allowing students to receive credit in middle school. Mr. Tansey asked if Oyster Adams students received high school credit for the AP test, or whether they simply received college credit. Ms. Wilson Phelan said it would be ironic if they did not receive high school credit. Ms. Randolph asked if the TF was only talking about mastery to prepare students for college (as opposed to career preparation), and Ms. Wilson Phelan said the question was whether students could demonstrate mastery prior to high school. Ms. Reilly said they had not resolved whether or not they should allow students to receive world language credit in middle school. Ms. Wilson Phelan said that was the question at hand – she had just asked whether middle school students should be allowed to demonstrate mastery, and what timing would be permissible. Ms. Reilly said that students who take AP tests early might appear to colleges as students who were not recent world language students. She added that if these students took a placement test, they might not earn credit for their AP scores if they were not high enough. She said they should consider whether to offer middle school credit for math - a test for entering 9th graders might be acceptable for colleges, but 6th or 7th grade test takers might not be viewed as favorably.

Mr. Foster said that a lot of students who are proficient in 6th or 7th grade – those taking pre-calculus during that time, for example – would continue taking math in high school. He added that an 8th grader who went to a high school with less rigorous standards than his or her middle school might not be able to receive credit for prior achievement, which he said would be discouraging.

Ms. Chisholm asked whether the mastery test credit counted for high school credit. She said that she took advanced math in middle school and had to take more advanced courses in high school, but she still took the same number of classes as she would have without starting at a higher level. Ms. Wilson Phelan said she was reluctant to backtrack on this issue because the TF had already reached consensus on that point. Ms. Chisholm said she thought the issue at hand was whether students should get credit for courses where they demonstrated mastery through tests, because TF members were concerned they would take the appropriate core content courses in high school and were worried there would be gaps in students' educational experiences.

Mr. Tansey said if a student took pre-calculus in 8th grade, then at the beginning of 9th grade, took and passed Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II tests, that student could avoid taking math again until college, and that was a concern. Mr. Mitchell said he was concerned about this issue, too. Mr. Foster said that students would have to be advanced to earn these credits. Mr. Batchelor said the work now is setting those boundaries.

Ms. Wilson Phelan said the group was saying that it was less important what students know than the timing of when they know it, and she asked if they were comfortable saying that. She said as a parent, she would not want her child to do something they had already mastered. Mr. Batchelor said that to her point, at the last TF meeting they had agreed that demonstrating mastery does not produce a gap or a hole. Instead, the proposal allows students to demonstrate mastery and receive credit for that knowledge. To the timing question and the frequency questions, there is more to discuss.

Dr. Bibo asked why students could not simply keep going and take more advanced courses. Mr. Mitchell said that the language as written is vague and that he had issues with it when looking at it through a lawyerly perspective; Ms. Wilson Phelan cautioned him not to, saying the language represented a principle rather than airtight language. Mr. Mitchell said that to him, the math language suggested that someone could learn all four high school math courses over one summer and test out of all four years. Ms. Wilson Phelan asked again whether the TF cared more about knowledge or timing. Reminding the TF of the bullets under discussion, she said she heard people saying mastery tests should be taken during high

school. Dr. Bibo said she heard Ms. Chisholm say that both knowledge and timing are important. She wondered why students should stop taking courses after demonstrating mastery, and she acknowledged timing was important. Ms. Wilson Phelan said this opinion is captured in bullet three, “Students are encouraged to enroll in higher-level math and language courses upon demonstrating mastery.” She asked if they should be required, instead of encouraged, to take more advanced classes. Ms. Chisholm said the TF could set minimum requirements, and Dr. Bibo said this change could have implications for bullet two, “These credits count toward the 24.0 required Carnegie Units.”

Ms. Randolph said that for students who will proceed to careers, rather than college, she has observed issues with people who are unable to advance in trades because they are not well versed in basic math. She asked how that played into these principles and how the proposed policy change would help students who are not college-bound, adding that in her industry, they have created remedial math courses for employees. Ms. Wilson Phelan said that the proposed recommendations addressed that issue by letting students specialize their math instruction outside of a traditional setting and receive credit for what they learn. Ms. Randolph said they offer construction and architectural math, but the basics, like fraction knowledge, are missing in many career-bound graduates. Ms. Chisholm said that if a graduate has a DCPS diploma and has taken Algebra II or beyond, per the requirements, they should have mastered fractions. Mr. Mitchell added that the basics for architectural math should be found in a Geometry class, and it is an issue separate from the requirements if Ms. Randolph receives graduates who have not mastered these basic mathematical principles.

Ms. Wilson Phelan said that, at least in minority report language, the TF should note that multiple TF members are uncomfortable with the possibility that allowing students to demonstrate mastery might cause students to avoid sitting in multiple classes, lose content knowledge, and be at a disadvantage when they matriculate in college.

Ms. Reilly said at the last TF meeting, members suggested limiting the number of classes that students could test out of. She said this represented a potential solution. Ms. Wilson Phelan said TF members had agreed not to limit the number of courses, and that was captured in the last set of minutes. Ms. Reilly said she had not seen it there and that she remembered people voicing opposition to this idea. Ms. Salciccioli said that, upon reviewing the minutes, there was evidence that nine of the thirteen members who were present had agreed not to limit the number of courses students could test out of. Mr. Foster asked what had been decided about allowing students to demonstrate mastery during middle school in the previous discussion, and Ms. Wilson Phelan said the TF had not yet set a time constraint on when students could demonstrate mastery. She asked the group to move forward and identify what mastery means – is it a threshold of 75%? Should students be allowed to take a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach to demonstrating mastery? This would allow students to create a portfolio or other materials that would preclude the need for students to take an exam.

Ms. Reilly said that demonstrating mastery was limited to math and world language because there are proven tests to allow students to demonstrate mastery in those areas. Mr. Tansey said the measure should be a test, rather than another option, and he suggested 85% as a passing score. Many TF members nodded in agreement. Ms. Wilson Phelan called for a vote, and six of eight TF members voted to say they were fine setting the mastery threshold at 85%, and Ms. Reilly said she needed more info before she could agree, as did Dr. Bibo. Ms. Wilson Phelan said that question of whether 85% was an appropriate threshold would go on a list of questions that Ms. Reilly could send to her community. Ms. Wilson Phelan then asked about different options to show mastery, adding that she didn’t know enough about UDL to understand what that might look like. She asked if it was a portfolio, who would offer it, and if it was an exam, who would offer it and who would proctor it. Could Anacostia HS offer their own test and send DCPS notification that a student had demonstrated mastery? Should the test be official and completed in testing conditions, like the PARCC exam, and could it be taken online? She concluded by asking what the

group would be comfortable saying would be a credible measure of proficiency. Mr. Tansey said that there could be language in the recommendations that would say that OSSE would research equivalent avenues to demonstrating mastery for students who cannot demonstrate it through a test. He did not want LEAs to decide how students could demonstrate mastery, because there could be a wide variety. Ms. Chisholm said she thought it would be problematic to offer an option for demonstrating mastery other than a test, because tests are the standard measure of mastery in college and graduate school. She was not sure how to consider the universe of non-test possibilities, either. Ms. Wilson Phelan said that it would be necessary to think further about what the test should be, and she asked if everyone agreed the state should decide what would qualify as the appropriate measure of mastery. Ms. Reilly said the question could not be left up to 66 different LEAs. TF members agreed that the state should set the standard.

Ms. Wilson asked how the tests should be offered. Who would administer the equivalency tests at what times? Could the exams be taken at any time? Several TF members said no, tests could not be taken at will. Mr. Mitchell asked where a student would go if he or she passed an exam in the middle of the semester. Ms. Chisholm said that would be a mess, and Mr. Mitchell said it would be particularly difficult for small high schools to navigate that issue.

Ms. Wilson Phelan asked about a student who had trouble with one segment of a course – what if a student took the algebra I test and passed every section but one – should they be allowed to retake the test, or that part of the test? Mr. Tansey said he would be fine offering the test either before or after a student took a course, as long as the bar to pass the test was high. He said he had taught had smart kids who were unable to pass a course due to attendance issues, and he felt that if they knew the material, they should not have to retake an entire course. He qualified this statement by saying that the bar for demonstrating mastery must be high – even if 85% is an arbitrary number, the TF needed to find the real-world number that would signify a student who passed the test had the knowledge of a typical A or B student. Ms. Chisholm agreed, saying that when she was saying the test should only be taken at the beginning of the semester, she had not been thinking about that type of student. Mr. Batchelor said that the test, as described by Mr. Tansey, would be like a credit recovery tool at the end of a class, and Mr. Tansey agreed with that characterization. Ms. Chisholm said it would be an alternative to putting a failing grade on a student’s transcript, but she cautioned that the cutoff score should be high. Ms. Wilson Phelan said she still wondered who would administer the test. Dr. Jowers-Barber said she was fine with a school administering the test, but it should be taken in testing conditions. Ms. Chisholm said that it would be possible to offer the test during a certain time frame, such as the first and last six weeks of the school year, in a controlled environment.

Ms. Reilly asked if the group should require that the tests be offered through LEAs instead of schools, worrying that students at some schools would be disadvantaged and wouldn’t have enough students to be able to administer a test. Mr. Mitchell said that tests would be administered at the individual level, so that should not be a concern, and Ms. Chisholm said the tests could be administered to a single student, as long as it happened within the six-week window. Dr. Bibo asked if the testing requirements had to be included in the policy, noting that there were a lot of exceptions that had been raised. Ms. Wilson Phelan said the high-level issues that mattered most to the TF should be included in the policy, because it was important to propose a credible policy.

Report Language and Community Engagement

Ms. Wilson Phelan noted that the TF had not had a chance to discuss community service principles but added that there was only one bullet to consider:

- Students shall complete a minimum of 50 hours of community service in high school

She asked TF members if there were other considerations that should go into the report and had not yet been identified, and said that if there were, TF members should share them with SBOE for inclusion in the next draft.

Next Steps and Closing

Mr. Foster said that throughout the tenure of the TF, its members repeatedly said that the body was not designed to address all of the problems within DC education. He suggested that SBOE convene a board that would have more authority to examine the education infrastructure in DC, because the TF would have a relatively small impact. Ms. Wilson Phelan asked if he meant a TF that would have a broader scope, and Mr. Foster said that because the existing school system was designed to prepare students for factory labor, the city needs a board that could question whether the education system was still set up to question whether schools were set up to position students for success. Ms. Wilson Phelan said she agreed with Mr. Foster's assessment and hoped that one of her colleagues on the SBOE would champion that work.

Dr. Bibo said that DCPS is holding Graduation Excellence Stakeholder Focus Groups between April 18 and May 2, and some sessions are designed to gather community and family member feedback. She said there is a website, bit.ly/dcpsgraduationexcellence, where stakeholders can learn more and RSVP to attend these meetings. Dr. Bibo said that DCPS is working through policy revisions that are aligned with and complementary to the TF's work, and DCPS would love to have TF members attend the sessions. She added that if anyone had questions, she would be happy to answer them or get answers from her colleagues. Ms. Chisholm asked why there weren't any sessions in Southeast DC, and Dr. Bibo said she would pass that question to her colleagues. Ms. Wilson Phelan encouraged TF members to attend the sessions, adding that it would be good for DCPS to gather feedback on some of the TF's ideas during these meetings.

Ms. Wilson Phelan and Mr. Batchelor thanked TF members for their work and adjourned the meeting. The TF will reconvene on April 25, 2018, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM.