



**ESSA Task Force Meeting #6**  
**January 9, 2018 at 6:00 PM**  
**441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 1117**  
**Washington, DC 20001**

**Minutes**

**ESSA Task Force Members:**

**Present:**

**Lannette Woodruff** (Task Force Co-Chair and Ward 4 Representative, 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)

**Allyson Criner Brown** (Ward 7 Education Council Member and Associate Director, Teaching for Change)

**Deborah Dantzer Williams** (Head of School, Inspired Teaching Public Charter School)

**Laura Fuchs** (WTU Board Member and Teacher, HD Woodson High School)

**Faith Gibson Hubbard** (Chief Student Advocate, State Board of Education)

**Donald Hense** (Chairman, Friendship Public Charter Schools)

**Juliana Herman** (Deputy Chief of Policy, DC Public Schools)

**Anne Herr** (Parent and Director of School Quality, FOCUS)

**Erica Hwang** (Instructional Coach, Brightwood Education Campus)

**Jack Jacobson** (Vice President and Ward 2 Representative, State Board of Education)

**Maya Martin** (Executive Director, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)

**Jacque Patterson** (DC Regional Director, Rocketship Public Schools)

**Richard Pohlman** (Executive Director, Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School)

**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, State Board of Education)

**Karen Williams** (President and Ward 7 Representative, State Board of Education)

**Shana Young** (Chief of Staff, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)

**Phone:**

**Erin Kupferberg** (Senior Manager of School Quality and Accountability, DC Public Charter School Board)



**Absent:**

**Ramona Edelin** (Executive Director, DC Association of Chartered Public Schools)

**Daniel Rodriguez** (Student, Benjamin Banneker High School)

**Suzanne Wells** (Founder, Capitol Hill Public Schools Parent Organization)

**Presenters:**

**Morrise Harbour** (Principal, Friendship Chamberlain)

**Grace Reid** (Principal, Barnard Elementary)

**Justin Tooley** (Special Assistant for Legislation and Policy, OSSE)

**SBOE Staff:**

**John-Paul Hayworth**, Executive Director

**Kit Faiella**, Policy Fellow

**Jamikka Kendrick**, Operations Specialist

**Paul Negrón**, 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 sixth ESSA Task Force meeting. The meeting opened with a presentation on the latest content proposal for DC school report cards by TF member and Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) Chief of Staff Shana Young and her colleague Justin Tooley. TF members gathered in small groups to discuss which parts of the report card felt responsive to community needs and where there was room for improvement, and each group shared their feedback with the rest of the TF. The TF then heard from a panel of high-performing school leaders at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The panel, moderated by TF member Deborah Dantzler Williams, addressed best practices in school leadership, school climate, academic rigor, and parent and community engagement. In closing, TF members ranked their choices for subcommittee membership, and the TF adjourned until February 6, 2018.

**Agenda Items**

**Welcome**

Dr. Woodruff greeted TF members and gave an overview of the evening's agenda.

She made two announcements: first, that TF members were encouraged to testify about the upcoming SBOE meeting on January 17, 2018 if they had any additional feedback to share about the



school report cards. Second, she let the TF know that Amon Payne, a student TF member, no longer attends a public school and as such would no longer be part of the TF. She announced her intention to find another student member from the SBOE's Student Advisory Committee (SAC). She stated that Ms. Payne would be recognized for her service to the task force at the January 17 SBOE meeting.

Dr. Woodruff then introduced TF member and OSSE Chief of Staff Shana Young and her colleague Justin Tooley, who presented updates to the school report card content.

### **OSSE Presentation on School Report Card**

Ms. Young gave an update on OSSE's work to-date, and she shared that the next step of the work would be to come to the TF and other outreach avenues to understand how the data should be organized and visualized. After that, OSSE efforts would move toward generating community excitement and educating people on how to use the report card.

Ms. Young shared that OSSE gathered feedback from nearly 1900 members of the DC community; OSSE generated an initial content proposal from early feedback, gathered stakeholder input and learned that families were interested in even more robust data, and updated their proposal based on the comments they received.

The top two themes from parent feedback were teacher data and parent and family engagement, and other important themes were requests for additional information on student activities, special education, and health.

Ms. Young then provided updates on the content proposal - in the first content proposal, OSSE suggested sharing data on the number of educators who were inexperienced (meaning one year of experience or less), but respondents did not feel that this provided a full picture and were interested in more data. OSSE's updated proposal is to present educator experience in bands, e.g., 1 year of experience, 2 - 5 years experience, 6 - 10 years experience. The overall goal is to measure the level of teacher experience within the school. Ms. Young noted that the TF's conversation about educator experience had been robust, and while not every data point can be displayed on a report card, OSSE would like to continue the conversation and facilitate broader conversations about teacher experience and effectiveness.

After OSSE heard stakeholders were interested in more data about parent/family involvement in schools, they initially suggested that the report card host links to schools' engagement plans or PTO/PTA data. Considering families' feedback, OSSE instead proposed presenting different data to reflect parents' interests, such as attendance at community events, demographics of parents involved in school activities, parent involvement in decision-making processes, and number of parent engagement activities at a given school. She then shared that OSSE also spoke with students - the SBOE SAC and the DC Department of Health's Youth Advisory Board. Students' feedback largely overlapped with parent feedback.

OSSE proposed adding a series of yes/no questions on schools' academic and extracurricular offerings (e.g., AP classes, [JROTC](#)) - this information is collected in other places, but OSSE believes it will be helpful to see these items on a report card.



OSSE also engaged with special education stakeholders, who shared that they wanted information on the environments (e.g., inclusion, self-contained) special education students are in; information on individual education plans (IEPs) including the number of students on plans, graduation rates for students with IEPs; and wrap-around services provided to students with IEPs. These data are not uniformly collected at the school level, but OSSE proposes that a future version of the report card will include robust special education data, following further conversations with stakeholders and schools. These conversations will focus on topics including, but not limited to, schools' compliance with the initial evaluation timeline and the number of students in the least restrictive environments.

Ms. Young said she was sharing the information first to thank the TF and show them that the result was responsive to their feedback, and also to give an update on the process. She said she hoped to provide mockups of the format and design in the next few months.

TF members then had an opportunity to ask questions:

- What tools does OSSE have to spot-check self-reported data?
  - Ms. Young indicated that OSSE will strive to ensure the information requested is verifiable.
- In the timeline, will the SBOE vote on the entire report card at its February 19th meeting, including visuals?
  - No; SBOE will vote on the content at its February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. OSSE will return to the TF and Board with additional design proposals, and the Board will vote on layout at a later date. OSSE asked questions about visuals in the same round of engagement where they asked about content, but the work will be done in two stages.
- How did OSSE use the feedback it received to arrive at its latest recommendations?
  - All the issues OSSE received are required to be on the report card; however, the visual questioned may have been confusing because several questions/issues were asked in one round of engagement. Overall, OSSE was curious to know what topics resonated the most with parents, even though ESSA required all topics to be required in reports.
- How did OSSE incorporate stakeholder feedback into its proposal?
  - OSSE used feedback to understand which of the required report card elements were more important to families than others; they will all be on the report card, but stakeholder preferences will inform which ones are more prominently placed on the final product.
- Will the report cards be available through an app, which some residents District prefer to a mobile site?
  - This was a new request to OSSE, but Ms. Young pledged to look into the possibility of creating an app.

### **Small Group Discussion – Report Card**

After hearing the presentation, the TF split into four small groups, and each group was asked to record their shared feedback on three questions:



- What are the two items on the report card that feel most responsive to your communities' needs?
- What are your top two questions or concerns about the report card?
- What are the two most important additional measures you would like to see on the 2019-2020 report card?

### **Small Group Report Out – Report Card**

The breakout groups came back together, and each group was asked to share its feedback, which was as follows:

#### *Responsive Measures:*

- Teacher data (stated by two different groups)
- Information on parent engagement and parent policies (stated by two different groups)
- Emphasis on student achievement
- Information on school programming
- Health data

#### *Top Questions/Concerns:*

- Question about how OSSE will make sure parents can interpret the report cards (stated by two different groups)
- Fear that self-reported measures would lead to inaccurate data (stated by two different groups)
- Concern that the way special education data is presented will be misleading
- Concern that the star system is overemphasized and will not result in a positive report card

#### *Additional Measures to Include in 2019-2020:*

- Information on the student experience – field trips, extracurriculars, culture (stated by two groups)
- Greater emphasis on growth
- Nuanced special education data – philosophy, practices

### **Make Report Card Recommendations**

TF members were given an opportunity to record any thoughts or questions about the report cards that were not captured in the small group report-out process. Dr. Woodruff noted that this feedback would be compiled and shared with Board members and OSSE.

### **Principal Panel**



Dr. Woodruff introduced the speakers, Dr. Grace Reid of Barnard Elementary, Mr. Morrise Harbour of Friendship Chamberlain, and Mr. Richard Pohlman of Thurgood Marshall Academy (TMA), as well as the moderator, Deborah Dantzer Williams, and she indicated that the speakers' and moderator's bios were provided in a handout. Ms. Dantzer Williams noted that the discussion would focus on school leadership, school climate, academic rigor, and parent/community engagement.

Each speaker provided a brief overview of his or her background and was asked to share what has helped their schools succeed. Dr. Reid shared that love for her profession students helped them succeed; Mr. Harbour expressed similar thoughts that love and understanding for students has helped him understand that success doesn't happen overnight; Mr. Pohlman contributed that active listening has helped everyone feel heard. Ms. Williams then opened the panel up to questions from the TF.

One TF member shared that his nonprofit, EmpowerK12, recognized Dr. Reid and Mr. Harbour because their schools had exceeded expectations on the PARCC assessment, and he added that he had heard positive feedback about Mr. Harbour's school. He asked what they were doing that was special and had led to a significant impact on low-income students. Dr. Reid said that it is imperative to have the right staff to meet a school leader's vision; she said that her responsibility is to educate children, regardless of their personal challenges, and she needs to fill her building with teachers who can meet that goal. Her staff must understand her expectations and build on them in a daily basis. She shared that literacy is an integral part of each day at Barnard Elementary, and her students understand the student success drives this focus on literacy. All staff members are part of her team, including non-instructional staff, and everyone is focused on the same goal of student achievement.

Mr. Harbour and Mr. Pohlman agreed with Dr. Reid; Mr. Harbour added that conversations do not always include resource allocation and use, and it is important to be intentional about resource use. He added that this is a component of his school's success; whenever they received a resource, his leadership team met to discuss how best to allocate it. The majority of his students are classified as economically disadvantaged, but he hired teachers who care deeply about students, and he retains them over time. He also expressed a belief in giving teachers autonomy that allows them to perform the art of teaching. Mr. Pohlman noted that teachers at TMA do not all teach the same way, and the school leadership team appreciates differences that help students learn. He expressed a belief that deep learning comes from empowered teachers. He said that each teacher's innate belief that all students can and will learn must be tested, and it is critical to ensure that every teacher in the building believes it, or students will quickly see that their teachers do not believe in them.

Ms. Dantzer Williams asked about the school leaders' efforts to build a positive school climate. Dr. Reid said she embraces all children and all parents. Some parents do not like going into school buildings, and she said parents with language barriers might be resistant to entering the school and communicating with staff. She ensures that there are school personnel who speak parents' languages, and she works to make sure parents know that they have a right to be in their children's school. Parents can visit their children's classrooms anytime, and they are invited to provide feedback. She added that her door is always open.

Mr. Harbour said that parent engagement has been the key to creating a positive climate, and once parents understood his team was listening to and responding to their concerns, the culture



improved. Giving students something to look forward to has also been a contributing factor to a positive climate. He shared that even when student behavior needs to be corrected, it is a conversation about how students should feel ownership over their school.

Mr. Pohlman said that his families are looking for a safe school, and that is the top of his considerations around school climate. He wants families to know that they have rules and they hold families accountable for them. He works hard to keep kids in school while following rules. TMA is a college preparatory school, and college readiness is part of the very first conversation his staff has with students.

Ms. Dantzler Williams highlighted how deeply the school leaders are invested in their schools, and she noted that the schools and approaches were not identical. She addressed academic rigor, asking how to balance rigor with the range of students enrolled in a given school. Mr. Pohlman said TMA has changed dramatically over the past four years, in part because they manage their own special education services. Other charter schools had DCPS as their special education LEA and were able to move students between schools in a way that TMA no longer does. This has required deep conversations about how rigor looks for students with intellectual disabilities or on a certification track. TMA is constantly evolving, but college readiness is a mainstay of the school, and the curriculum is focused on ensuring graduates are ready for entry-level college courses.

Mr. Harbour shared that he is indifferent to rigor; he and his team understand that students need to perform at a high level, but they also consider the varied students they have. He said that his students have ownership of their data and have regular conversations about their progress. He added that success breeds success.

Dr. Reid agreed that it is critical for students to own their data and understand how they can improve. She said that DCPS defines rigor for school leaders, but she has her own preferences; for example, she does not like to see worksheets in her classrooms. She has moved away from “sage on the stage” instruction and runs a small group instruction school, which helps meet each child’s needs. The SPED population at her school is large, and she has autistic students, which requires a nuanced look at what each child needs.

Ms. Dantzler Williams then asked each panelist to highlight something they did for family engagement that was successful and to share what made it successful. Mr. Harbour said his first thought was school shows; parents come for awards assemblies, but they also come for performances, and it is important to show that his students can do more than basic reading and writing. This may also help parents learn more about their children. Over the last couple of years, students’ social awareness has increased, and he supports initiatives they want to pursue.

Dr. Reid said her parents are extremely supportive and respond well to phone trees. They participate in Saturday Academy, Literacy Night, and Math Night. The parents feel that it is their school. Mr. Pohlman said he took the junior class and their families on a college visit, and it was helpful for the students to tour the campus on a different tour than the one their parents took. He added that a year and a half ago, his school implemented family game night, and it has been hugely successful. At these game nights, they don’t discuss academic issues, but teachers, staff, and families get together to have dinner and play games, which everyone enjoys.



Ms. Dantzler Williams thanked Dr. Woodruff for bringing educators into the conversation and told TF members not to forget these panelists when they hear disparaging remarks about education in the city. She asked them to share the wonderful things happening in DC schools.

### **Closing**

TF members will be dividing into subcommittees in future meetings; the topics are leadership, school climate, academic rigor, and school resources and funding equity. Dr. Woodruff asked the TF to look at a draft description of each committee and rank their committee membership preferences.

The TF will meet again on Tuesday, February 6, 2017, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM at 441 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW, room 1117.