



**ESSA Task Force Meeting #3
October 3, 2017 at 6:00 PM
441 4th Street, NW, 1114
Washington, DC 20001**

Minutes

ESSA Task Force Members:

Present:

Lannette Woodruff (Task Force Co-Chair and Ward 4 Representative, State Board of Education)
Alex Rose-Henig (Dean of Students, BASIS DC)
Allyson Criner Brown (Ward 7 Education Council Member and Associate Director, Teaching for Change)
Daniel Rodriguez (Student, Benjamin Banneker High School)
Elizabeth Primas (ESSA Program Manager, National Newspaper Publishers Association)
Erica Hwang (Instructional Coach, Brightwood Education Campus)
Erin Kupferberg (Senior Manager of School Quality and Accountability, DC Public Charter School Board)
Faith Gibson Hubbard (Chief Student Advocate, State Board of Education)
Jack Jacobson (Vice President and Ward 2 Representative, State Board of Education)
Jacque Patterson (DC Regional Director, Rocketship Public Schools)
Joe Weedon (Ward 6 Representative, State Board of Education)
Josh Boots (Executive Director, EmpowerK12)
Juliana Herman (Deputy Chief of Policy, DC Public Schools)
Karen Williams (President and Ward 7 Representative, State Board of Education)
Laura Fuchs (WTU Board Member and Teacher, HD Woodson High School)
Maya Martin (Executive Director, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)
Ramona Edelin (Executive Director, DC Association of Chartered Public Schools)
Samantha Brown (Special Education and Reading Teacher, Calvin Coolidge High School)
Shana Young (Chief of Staff, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)
Sheila Strain-Clark (Parent and Chief of Programs, Sasha Bruce Youthwork)
Suzanne Wells (Founder, Capitol Hill Public Schools Parent Organization)
Yolanda Corbett (Co-Chair, Parent Advocate Leaders Group)

Phone:

Jhonna Turner (Parent Engagement Program Coordinator, Washington Lawyers' Committee)

Absent:

Amon Payne (Student, Columbia Heights Educational Campus)
Anne Herr (Parent and Director of School Quality, FOCUS)
Deborah Dantzer Williams (Head of School, Inspired Teaching Public Charter School)
Donald Hense (Chairman, Friendship Public Charter Schools)
Julie Anne Green (Executive Director, New Futures)
Richard Pohlman (Executive Director, Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School)



Presenters:

Patience Peabody (Director of Communications, Office of the State Superintendent of Education)

SBOE Staff:

Jamikka Kendrick, Staff Assistant
Paul Negron, Program Support Specialist
Matt Repka, Policy Analyst
Maria Saliccioli, Policy Analyst

Executive Summary

Dr. Woodruff welcomed task force (TF) members and reminded the group of their continued commitment to learning about education in the District through a data-driven lens. TF member Josh Boots, a data expert, gave a presentation on the transition from the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC-CAS) assessment to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment and provided an equity-focused look at PARCC scores in the District. The task force then engaged in a training session on leading focus groups about school report card features. Patience Peabody, Director of Communications at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, joined TF member Shana Young to present a toolkit on leading community focus groups. TF members learned about the content of the toolkit and the purpose of the focus groups, then participated in mock focus groups themselves and gave feedback on the exercise. As the meeting concluded, task force members were reminded to sign up to host an upcoming focus group held around the District. Ms. Peabody and Ms. Young told task force members they would adjust the toolkit based on TF feedback and would send updated materials in a week, which will allow the task force to engage their communities around school report cards.

Agenda Items

Welcome

ESSA Task Force Chair Dr. Lannette Woodruff opened the meeting by calling attention to the ESSA focus group schedule, encouraging all TF members to take note of the schedule and organize focus groups as their constituent groups become available. She let the group know they could schedule focus groups in November, until Thanksgiving break.

Dr. Woodruff then welcomed the group and alerted TF members to the fact that the September 5th meeting minutes were in their binders and were posted online, and she reminded the group of the substance of that meeting, a discussion of equity reports. Ms. Young said that the next set of equity reports would be available before EdFest in December 2017.

Dr. Woodruff informed the group of her intent to help TF members understand the education landscape in the District and reminded the group of their focus on data. She let the group know that Mr. Boots would be presenting on PARCC and that the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) would host focus group training. She then reminded the group of the last meeting's exit tickets, which asked TF members to define equity and identify an important equity issue. She read the



responses and alerted the group to the importance of a session defining equity in the near future, letting the group know that she would publish responses in the near future.

She informed TF members that they would later receive a handout that highlights achievement data across all eight wards in the city. She spoke about the definition of “at-risk” students, informing the group that students who are federally categorized as at-risk are not those who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch - those students are classified as economically disadvantaged. At-risk students have additional risk factors, such as eligibility for TANF or SNAP, homelessness, or being a high school student who is one or more years older than is expected for his/her grade level.

Dr. Woodruff then introduced presenter Josh Boots by giving a short overview of his background and data expertise.

Presentation of PARCC Data Findings

Mr. Boots presented his agenda:

- What is the PARCC assessment and why do we take it
- How and where are the results reported
- Overall DC 2017 results
- Proficiency changes
- Brief review of demographic results and trends
- Part 2 planned analysis

He gave background information on the PARCC, framing it as an assessment that the District administers in grades 4 and 8 as well as when students take Integrated Math, Geometry, and English Language Arts (ELA) II. Students take the course-specific PARCC exams the year they take the course, but Mr. Boots added that ELA II is typically a 10th grade course. Students with individual education programs (IEPs) are provided appropriate accommodations; IEPs for certain students offer those students the opportunity to take an alternate assessment. PARCC is administered in the spring. Mr. Boots delved into the importance of shifting from the DC-CAS exam to the PARCC, displaying a sample test item focused on scientific notation from each exam and noting that the simpler DC-CAS item compared unfavorably in its ability to assess students’ in-depth knowledge.

Mr. Boots explained that proficiency levels decreased when the city switched from DC-CAS to PARCC because the examination was offering a more accurate picture of students’ understanding. He said that instead of asking students to answer simple questions, DC is now asking students to use problem-solving and analytical skills. He emphasized PARCC’s emphasis on critical thinking.

The District has transitioned from administering the PARCC exam as a paper assessment to an offering it as a computer-based assessment; the last schools transitioned to digital administration in 2017. PARCC uses advanced statistical methodology, which Mr. Boots guaranteed ensures comparable results from year to year.

PARCC is also a useful metric of college- and career-readiness, especially given colleges’ role in forming the assessment; some institutions of higher learning accept PARCC scores as guarantees of proficiency. Students receive scores on a scale from 650 - 850 and receive an overall performance level from 1 - 5, with 1 indicating students did not meet expectations and 5 indicating students exceeded expectations. OSSE reports the percent of students earning a 4 or 5 for meeting or



exceeding expectations, and the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) reports the students who receive a level 3 or higher, indicating that these students are approaching expectations, meeting expectations, or exceeding expectations.

OSSE posts PARCC results at <http://results.osse.dc.gov>, and results are also available on a host of other District websites and national scorecards. EmpowerK12, Mr. Boots' company, and Democrats for Education Reform (DFER DC) offer interactive PARCC dashboards. Students and families should receive individual score reports at the beginning of a new school year, and when students transfer schools, their new schools should also have access to these reports.

Mr. Boots then displayed OSSE's PARCC dashboard, providing an overview of the available resources. OSSE helps families interpret scores and provides historic score data. Mr. Boots then displayed his own dashboards, showing data presented by grade level, demographic, and other metrics.

Mr. Boots showed that while students were 50% proficient in ELA in 2014 on the DC-CAS, that number dropped to 25% in ELA in 2015, using the PARCC. Math scores changed from 54% proficient on the DC-CAS in 2014 to 22% proficient on the PARCC in 2015.

TF members asked him several questions: when asked about special education students and their PARCC scores; Mr. Boots responded that users could sort information on his website's results portal based on special education status. Ms. Young added that not all students who receive special education services are eligible for testing accommodations. Another TF member asked if shifts in PARCC scores were attributable to demographic shifts in the city. Mr. Boots said that this would feature more heavily in the second part of his presentation.

Mr. Boots then displayed PARCC scores by grade level in ELA and Math, and highlighted Grade 3 ELA and Grade 8 math in particular as needing attention.

Next, he displayed proficiency gains broken down by race/ethnicity and additional subgroups. Mr. Boots noted gains across the board but pointed out that at-risk and economically disadvantaged group gains trailed the average.

Mr. Boots displayed a correlation plot matrix with PARCC proficiency gains plotted against various subgroup characteristics. He noted strong positive correlations between schools with high percentages of white students and strong negative correlations between schools with large numbers of at-risk students. He pointed out that within subgroups, there appears to be limited correlation in changes from year to year; at-risk status is correlated with achievement but not with growth. Latino, ELL, and special education status were not statistically significant.

Ms. Young talked about the importance of growth and acknowledging, crediting schools that achieve growth year over year, irrespective of baseline achievement or percentages of at-risk youth served.

A TF member asked if these were school-level or cohort-level data; Mr. Boots clarified that these are school-level data.



In closing, Mr. Boots noted that small changes in correlation can mean big impacts and that the correlation between the percent of at-risk students and student achievement has intensified over the past three years of PARCC data.

Q&A

After the formal presentation was over, TF members were given time to ask questions. Mr. Boots and other TF members explained that test scores are based on the wards students go to school in, rather than the wards they live in, and that Mr. Boots' nonprofit does not use economically disadvantaged as a way to sort student data, because any student who attends a school with a certain threshold of economically disadvantaged students is counted as economically disadvantaged in datasets, regardless of his/her family's actual financial status. This makes the metric less meaningful. One question that would be answered at a future meeting was the number of children in DC who are not enrolled in school.

Dr. Woodruff concluded the discussion by acknowledging that there were still more questions but that the group was constrained by time. Mr. Boots will return to present more data at a future meeting, at which time the discussion on PARCC data will resume.

Focus Group Training

Dr. Woodruff introduced Ms. Young and her co-presenter, Patience Peabody, Director of Communications at OSSE. The two gave a presentation called "Building a Parent-Driven School Report Card."

Ms. Young informed the group that OSSE would publish its first school report card in December 2018. She added that while the District's previous efforts exceed those of some other states, OSSE could always improve. She explained that in all toolkit materials, the use of "parents" refers to parents, families, and everyone who cares for children.

The school report card is designed to inform parents, help parents engage with schools and make decisions about schools, and shape policymakers' resource decisions. The report card should also create common language for all District residents to use.

OSSE will design and publish the report card, a process that will be similar to the work they already do with MySchoolDC and other initiatives. They will work with schools and LEAs to collect information securely and without placing an undue burden on schools. The State Board of Education (SBOE) will approve the eventual accountability system and the report card's contents and format, and will also engage the community on feedback for how to make the report card accessible and useful for families. Task force members will collect and provide critical feedback.

Some important limits to the work are:

- Parents and families are the primary audience for the report card.
- Parent/family interests must be balanced by the effort it will require of schools and LEAs to collect the data.
- ESSA requires certain data points to be part of the report card.
- The report card must be launched by December 2018, but it is possible that there are components that will not be ready for December 2018 that can be included on a future report card.



Ms. Peabody introduced OSSE's engagement strategy as expert-informed, locally led, feedback-driven, and ongoing and sustainable. Ms. Young added that it is important to engage with a variety of groups. Ms. Peabody explained that OSSE planned to incorporate as many family and parent voices as possible by hosting feedback sessions, supporting community-led feedback such as the focus groups TF members will hold, and launching an online survey to help more families react to potential report card content. She underscored the importance of diverse respondents who reflect the makeup of the District.

A TF member shared that she didn't learn about the ESSA plan until February 2017, in advance of the March vote, and she considers herself to be up-to-date on education news. She added that people invested in education throughout the city were similarly unaware of the work, and asked for more information on how this effort would be more inclusive of the community.

Ms. Peabody responded that OSSE had learned a lot from the prior effort and had begun communicating with stakeholders much earlier in the process. She added that there would be an emphasis on real-time updates that OSSE and its partners would share periodically on a report card-specific website.

Another TF member shared that she participated in listening sessions in underserved wards and heard significant feedback that was not incorporated. She noted that she put her name out as someone who is willing to engage with OSSE to gather feedback, and while she does not feel that the community's entire set of ideas has to be incorporated, she felt that there should be an explanation of why certain perspectives are not adopted into the final product.

Ms. Peabody shared that OSSE is using a feedback loop model, providing more live feedback than in the past. OSSE will present what they've heard, what they proposed to do to address that feedback, and why. The work will take part in two phases, content and design, and OSSE plans to elicit continual feedback.

Ms. Young shared that the TF is an important component of the feedback gathering process but is not the only piece of the puzzle; however, OSSE acknowledges the TF's unique role in varied communities.

At the next TF meeting, OSSE will provide an update on the feedback they have received; in December, they will offer a sample report card, and in January, the group will see a final version of the report card.

The focus group toolkit is divided into four types of documents: materials to help facilitators prepare for their sessions, promotional materials, materials to be used during sessions, and a tool to help facilitators submit feedback to OSSE. OSSE is flexible on how they receive the feedback and is willing to work with facilitators to collect it.

Ms. Young shared that OSSE piloted these materials at the OSSE Parent Summit, and it was successful. She thanked TF members for agreeing to host focus groups and added that OSSE would be hosting groups that will be posted on their public website.

TF members split into four groups to explore the toolkit.



Ms. Peabody modeled the opening of a focus group and how a facilitator might explain the purpose of a school report card. She then instructed each group to designate a note-taker, discuss the information that is important from a parent, then an administrator perspective, and record the discussion.

The groups were asked to share some of the results of their conversation; ne group shared that they'd be interested in knowing a school's percentage of qualified teachers and their certifications. They would collect information on PARCC, GPAs, the percent of provisional, fully certified teachers, and other academic data. They did not have time to discuss how they would collect the data, but suggested surveys as a possible means of information gathering.

A second group cited health care as important data; they would like to know a school's philosophy around and programming for mental health and the availability of school nurses.

A third group talked about the importance, cost, and availability of before- and after-care. They would gather this information from schools and/or from the Department of Parks and Recreation.

TF members were then asked to look at the list of required report card items and reflect on what these items might mean or what the data might look like on a report card, identifying any confusing words or items.

TF members offered the following feedback and asked the following questions:

- One TF member asked about the presence of metrics that appeared specifically geared toward some age groups over others. Ms. Peabody responded that TF members should indicate the most important items based on their current concerns, rather than the items they would pick if they were thinking about their children in the future.
- A TF member said that it was difficult to understand the full universe of possibilities through taking part in this activity.
- One TF member said that she was initially confused about the data portion; she wasn't sure of the extent to which she should be letting participants' creativity flow vs. reigning them in, based on what she thought might be possible. Ms. Young said that OSSE could provide guiding questions to help with this challenge.
- A TF member said he was confused because some fields were similar to one another, and he didn't think the list was exhaustive. He suggested that many parents' top and bottom three wish list data items are not required, and it would be good to have a way to share feedback, through the focus groups, that the most important items are not included. Ms. Young clarified that she wanted to know the most important of the required items, but that this list did not need to be the top three overall items. She added that this comment was helpful feedback to get OSSE to greater clarity.
- One TF member suggested that the two columns OSSE used in the exercise, data that they would collect and how, could be combined into one.
- Another TF member said that some required items are very nuanced, and not everyone may understand the nuances. She added that it would be helpful to define and/or describe each of the items, and also to combine similar items. Ms. Young said it was a balance but that the OSSE team would consider it further.
- One member of the TF said that she would need to group items into categories to get at people's additional questions and make sure she was able to elicit the necessary feedback. Ms. Brown said that it is great for parents to know what OSSE is using, and if the toolkit



features the language OSSE has been using, parents in focus groups should know what's being discussed and do the work of grouping fields on their own.

- Another TF member said that some answers require qualitative analysis, rather than just numbers, and there isn't a sophisticated understanding of how to do high-quality qualitative analysis instead of simple surveys. Ms. Young agreed that this is important and said that the script does remind parents that not everything they discuss will end up in a report card. Furthermore, not everything that people care about can be included in a report card, but it is important to have the conversations. There are legitimate limitations to the report card work, and she does not want to indicate that OSSE will do more than is possible. Dr. Edelin responded that numbers don't convey why things work and for whom.
- A TF member suggested switching the order of exercises, starting with what's required and moving to what data people would like to see. Many members of the TF agreed. Ms. Gibson Hubbard said that this was what she was trying to convey earlier and said that it would help people understand what exists and allow parents to think more outside-of-the-box because parents wouldn't generate required items while generating their wish-list items.
- One TF member said that doing this work without giving parents information on what is required does parents a disservice. Parents should be able to leave meetings more informed.
- Another TF member agreed that it would be helpful to start with what is already collected; it would be helpful to frame the conversation around what already exists and what is missing.
- Another TF member said that it was not clear that PARCC performance referred solely to English and math scores. Ms. Young agreed. This TF member then asked how OSSE would share the revised toolkit. Ms. Peabody said OSSE would launch the microsite on October 10, and TF members will receive a private link containing the materials. Ms. Young said OSSE would make revisions based on the TF conversation, upload revised documents, and send them out. OSSE will also publish a calendar of activities - both TF focus groups and OSSE-hosted groups, and train-the-trainer sessions for anyone who has not yet been trained and is interested in hosting focus groups. TF members' focus groups should take place in the next 6 - 8 weeks.
- One TF member asked for the last date OSSE would be able to receive focus group feedback, and Ms. Young said it would be the day before Thanksgiving, November 22. This will allow OSSE to present in November and December with compiled, analyzed focus group feedback.
- A final TF member wondered whether it was a priority to speak with parents and families. If not, she asked if TF members should speak with everyone in their networks and ask them to put themselves in families' shoes. Ms. Young responded that the primary audience is parents and families, but communities at large are encouraged to engage. She added that PTOs are helpful audiences, and that OSSE will collect information on who attends focus groups to increase transparency.

Closing

Ms. Young thanked the group for their feedback and patience. Dr. Woodruff asked the group to complete their exit tickets, and the meeting was adjourned.

The TF will meet again on Tuesday, November 7, 2017, from 6:00 - 8:00 PM at 441 4th Street NW, room 1117.

