

Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

February 1, 2023, Meeting Summary

Key decisions and actions are in **bold**.

SCYPT Members in Attendance:

Tom Arnold, Leslie Atkins, Michael Axler, Michael Becketts, Telaekah Brooks, Karla Bruce, Ingrid Guerra-Lopez, Kelly Henderson, Victor Hoskins, Jessica Hudson, Frances Ivey, Rick Leichtweis, Chris Leonard, Rodney Lusk, Megan McLaughlin, Lt. Marc Mitchell, Diane Mucci, Dalia Palchik, Sloan Presidio, Elaine Tholen, Paul Thomas, Matt Thompson, Douglas Tyson, Daryl Washington

Action Item – SCYPT Endorsement of the SCYPT Workforce Readiness- Opportunity Youth Plan

Bill Browning presented an overview of the Opportunity Youth Report, giving a brief history and asking for SCYPT’s endorsement of the plan’s guiding principles, goals, and strategies. In developing the plan, youth shared that they see the system as confusing and disconnected. The goal is to form a network where youth see multiple paths and people to help.

Research for the report included:

- Youth Voice: Five focus groups with over 50 youth.
- Local Service Providers: 19 interviews with youth program leaders.
- National Best Practice Research: Literature reviews and discussions with regional and national leaders.

Key Findings:

- Overall mismatch of what opportunity youth want/need and what the system does.
- Disproportionate representation by specific audience sub-groups, neighborhoods and high schools.
- Lack of backbone coordinating organization.
- Policy compliance activities precede relationship-building and service experiences.
- Small scale of Opportunity Youth re-engagement of 100s in Fairfax vs. 1,000s in established Opportunity Youth collaboratives.

Proposed guiding principles are trauma-informed, asset-based, person centered, and equity focused. There are five goals in the report:

- 1) Establish Clear and Consolidated Ownership and Accountability for a Collaborative Network of Organizations and Programs Supporting Opportunity Youth.
- 2) Lower High School Dropout Rates and Improve On-time Graduation Rates.
- 3) Provide Consistent Regional Re-Engagement Outreach and Navigation Support to Help Opportunity Youth Access Quality Programs and Services.
- 4) Increase Local Capacity in High Quality, Low Barrier, and High-Impact Career Development Programs and Services for Opportunity Youth.
- 5) Increase Business Engagement to Help Develop Untapped Youth Talent into Reliable Sources of Skilled Workers.

Fairfax Futures is recommended as the backbone coordinating organization. There was discussion about how prevention strategies for youth while they are in school are critical. The WISH center in South County is an existing example for reengagement. A network of reengagement centers is needed, a high quality program network, coordinating and integrating all programs. FCPS has a pilot program, Accelerated Workforce program. Also need the business engagement piece.

Two goals for the consideration of SCYPT.

- 1) What would Fairfax Futures do for the first couple of years, deliverables.
- 2) Coordinated programming, how to work together and reach 250 youth quickly who are not being served today.

Next Steps:

- Meet with the Fairfax Futures Board and seek approval for new backbone role.
- Transition to long-term collaborative governance structure.
- Implement activities to build backbone organization capacity and field testing new approaches.
- Coordinate planning with MBK on related (or similar) outcomes .

Members agreed the plan was well designed and a good program. There was discussion about the difficulties finding connections to programs and the need for a connecting organization. Many people/youth don't know what's available and who to contact. Focus should build on the work that is happening and bring partners together. Potential funding options were discussed, including Economic Opportunity grants and working with private partners and businesses. Need to look at where the youth are located and what transportations concerns they may have. It was noted that the voice of youth was present in the report, and the importance to continue involving youth and families. Many groups have unique needs, those with disabilities as an example, and parent involvement is critical. Many programs have eligibility-based criteria which can be a challenge. The question was asked why Fairfax Futures was chosen? While they don't have specific program expertise they have the capacity to do the work and be a connector for coordinating the network. Northern Virginia Community College can play a part in the partnership, has workforce planning programs, financial aid, scholarships, and other opportunities available for youth.

The SCYPT unanimously voted to endorse the Opportunity Youth plan framework.

Action Item – SCYPT Endorsement of the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Initiative Plan

SCYPT member Telakeah Brooks along with Isaac King from the Capital Youth Empowerment Program presented the My Brother's Keeper Fairfax Initiative. They shared a brief history of the national movement begun by President Obama. This initiative is not an alternative to existing programs and is best when it is community led and needs community buy in and trust to be successful. It includes programming that touches all areas for youth, STEM, finances, healthy relationships, Fathers in Tech, and workforce programs are some examples.

MBK work is rooted in six key life milestones for boys and young men of color (BYMOC):

- 1) Kindergarten readiness.
- 2) Third grade reading (reading on grade level).
- 3) Graduating from high school college and career ready.
- 4) Completing postsecondary education or training.
- 5) Entering the workforce.
- 6) Keeping kids on track and re-engaging them when they need it.

The initiative's goal is to remove roadblocks to impact system change. By joining the MBK initiative Fairfax will implement action plans and the One Fairfax racial and social equity policy. Data will be tracked over time and used to drive outcomes.

MBK Fairfax will work to improve the following specific outcomes:

- Improving on time high school graduation rates for all BYMOC.
- Increasing the number/percentage of BYMOC obtaining the advanced diploma.
- Reducing the percentage of BYMOC who are dropping out of high school (this includes re-engaging those who have stopped/dropped out).

Next steps:

- Present to the Human Services Committee of the Board of Supervisors for approval to accept the challenge on 2/28/23.
- Present to the Board of Supervisors on 3/07/23 for formal vote to accept the challenge and register with the Obama Foundation.
- Accept the challenge with the Obama Foundation.
- Host the Local Action Summit and start brainstorming strategies and solutions for the work.

SCYPT members noted the six key milestones align with current FCPS work. There was discussion about the need to build a sense of community and importance of ensuring the inclusion of all groups, particularly in the data. Relating to transportation, need to look at all options where youth are present and can get to easily, targeting resources and distributing programming equitably. Retail spaces and the redevelopment of the judicial complex are places to consider for programs. The question was raised, which jurisdictions around us currently participate, D.C. does and Prince George is considering. It was noted that the Obama Foundation's headquarters is in D.C. and a resource. Members discussed how the initiative ties in with current goals and key foundations, focusing on on-time graduation, achieving advanced diplomas, school readiness, reading, and strategies of prevention and intervention. The timeline was discussed, a local action summit would bring non-profit, youth, business partners, government, and other stakeholders together to create change at the local level. Youth can share the barriers they are facing and often have proposed solutions.

Once an application for this initiative is accepted the summit must be planned and occur within 180 days. Fairfax has already begun reviewing policy and data in preparation and would be able to focus on planning for a summit.

The SCYPT unanimously voted to endorse the My Brother's Keeper Initiative Plan, Telaekah Brooks abstained from voting as she felt being a presenter and a voting member would be a conflict of interest.

Items Presented by SCYPT Members

Isaac King shared information about an upcoming CYEP Conference focusing on economic availability for high school and college students on Monday, February 20, 2023 at the Capital One Center in Tysons.

[CYEP | Youth Empowerment | Community Outreach Programs](#)

School Board member, Megan McLaughlin encouraged SCYPT members to provide feedback on the FCPS Strategic Plan which will be accepted through mid to late May. There is a schedule of community meetings available online.

[FCPS Strategic Planning Process for 2022-23](#)

Public Comment

None