

Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

March 29th, 2023, Meeting Summary

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

SCYPT Members in Attendance:

Leslie Atkins, George Becerra, Michael Becketts, Karla Bruce, Judith Dittman, Frances Ivey, Chris Leonard, Rodney Lusk, Megan McLaughlin, Diane Mucci, Dalia Palchik, Sloan Presidio, Chris Reeve, Elaine Tholen, Paul Thomas, Elaine Tholen, Matt Thompson, Lloyd Tucker, Douglas Tyson, Daryl Washington, Jenna White

Update 1 – Community Schools Initiative in Fairfax County

Saray Smalls from FCPS, with support from Kristen Brennan from NCS, shared a Multi-Tiered Evaluation of the Community Schools Initiative in Fairfax County. Community Schools were defined as public schools that partner with families and community organizations to provide well-rounded educational opportunities and supports for students' school success. Community schools are unique in the way that they combine four key pillars to create the conditions necessary for students to thrive:

- 1) integrated student supports;
- 2) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities;
- 3) active family and community engagement; and
- 4) collaborative leadership ad practices

The presentation reviewed the timeline of this initiative to date, starting with the formation of a SCYPT committee in 2017 through the School Board's request for an evaluation of the pilot community school sites in February 2022. Current sites of Community Schools in Fairfax County are Mount Vernon Woods Elementary School, Walt Whitman Middle School and Glasgow Middle School.

The results of the evaluation were the focus of much of the rest of the presentation. The evaluation included family survey, staff survey, site-level survey and both structured and informational interviews along with a review of school-level data. The findings of the evaluation resulted in the following considerations being put forward:

- 1) Central Coordination
 - Enhancing coordination and management by creating a full-time FCPS central office position to lead the development of standardized implementation plans, to maintain standard policies, procedures and MOUs across sites, and to standardize training and professional development.
- 2) Assessment and Evaluation
 - Standardizing needs assessment templates for annual use and the development of action plans based on needs assessment findings.
- 3) Communications
 - Expanded guidelines for internal and external communications to improve program awareness and increase engagement.
- 4) Site Selection Process
 - Utilization of clearly defined metrics along with input from stakeholders to identify 25 sites to be considered for expansion annually.

5) School Site Coordinator Position

- Consideration of either FCPS or the county employing the site coordinators to further support standardization.

SCYPT members expressed excitement about the presentation and the initiative moving forward. There were some questions and comments about the evaluation and the considerations that emerged from the process. In terms of site selection, there were questions about the ratio of high schools to middle schools, and the methodology of identifying 5 schools per region- which, while an equal approach, is not likely to be equitable. This led into discussion of the complication of boundaries in Fairfax County and how those boundaries sometimes result in children being within walking distance of a school in their community that is not the school that they actually attend. The goal of a community school is to serve the community, so the needs of the community surrounding the school site - not just the needs of the students who attend the school - are important to consider when identifying the communities that could benefit the most. Several SCYPT members mentioned the opportunities that exist for alignment and coordination with Opportunity Neighborhoods and more strategic use of existing resources in communities where community-based organizations are already working closely with schools and families until community schools are fully implemented.

There were differing responses to the consideration put forward regarding the site coordinator position- specifically, having the site coordinator employed by FCPS or Fairfax County. Current site coordinators in the 3 pilot sites are employed by community-based organizations. SCYPT members noted the connection CBOs have to families and the increased capacity those relationships bring to their ability to identify community needs. It was noted that the structure of partnerships will be important moving forward - clearly defining who will do what from a resource and coordination perspective.

SCYPT members noted low response rates in terms of family participation in the evaluation as well as how it is still too early to determine outcomes. There was interest in division wide trends (attendance, SOL pass rates, SEL screener, etc.) since the evaluation stated that trends at community school sites were in line with division level data. Data about those trends will be shared in the full report, which is not yet complete. Smalls noted that the timing of family surveys was not ideal, and that the timing of future surveys will better consider timing most likely to result in increased participation across stakeholder groups.

Next Steps per Sloan Presidio are that the School Board should approve the framework, and will then share with the Board of Supervisors later this year for next year's budget discussions.

Update 2 – Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan Update – Early Development Instrument (EDI)

Keisha Dotson (NCS), Flor Philips (NCS), and Lisa Pilson (FCPS) along with Josh Bader and Leila Espinosa from UCLA, presented an update on the Early Development Instrument (EDI) that supports strategy 4 of the Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan: promote equity-focused planning and decision making, as well as shared accountability, through the use of data.

The EDI is an internationally validated measure that is administered every 3 years by kindergarten teachers. It covers 16 subdomains that capture development in the areas of:

- Physical health and well-being
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Language and cognitive development
- Communication skills and general knowledge

Results have a population focus and are reported based on neighborhood geography. The EDI provides a snapshot of developmental outcomes for children in the community that can be used to inform planning, investment and actions, to catalyze partnerships based improving the lives of children, and to monitor progress over time to assess collective impacts and investments.

The presenters shared the plan for administering the EDI in Fairfax County and shared data from 2020 – 2022. These results provide a baseline for planning purposes and considerations for services and needs. Dotson highlighted plans to create an action plan outlining specific uses of the data in conjunction with FCPS. The detailed action plan, which will incorporate family and community voice, will be shared with SCYPT at a future meeting.

SCYPT members had questions about the maps shared by the UCLA team. Members had suggestions for existing maps that should be overlaid with the results of the EDI to give a more complete picture, specifically the Fairfax Vulnerability Index and the Health Vulnerabilities Index.

Next steps are to use the results to:

- inform the work of the Family Council and Family Partnership Hub;
- expansion of pre-k to increase access in identified communities;
- targeted professional development;
- monitor progress of community effort over time to assess collective impact and investments

Items Presented by SCYPT Members

Chris Leonard shared the update that the Board of Supervisors had approved the request for Fairfax County to accept the challenge to join the Obama Foundation’s My Brothers Keeper Alliance. SCYPT members will be updated on the details of the summit as they develop.

Public Comment

None