

Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

April 7, 2021, Meeting Summary

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

SCYPT Members in Attendance:

Kimberly Adams, Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Leslie Atkins, George Becerra, Michael Becketts, Bob Birmingham, Michelle Boyd, Telaekah Brooks, Karla Bruce, Judith Dittman, Alicia Doe, Mark Ginsberg, Kelly Henderson, Pamela Hilbert, Brendan Hooke (for Dave Rohrer), Victor Hoskins, Jessica Hudson, Frances Ivey, Rick Leichtweis, Chris Leonard, Rodney Lusk, Megan McLaughlin, Dalia Palchik, Stella Pekarsky, Fahemeh Pirzadeh, Sloan Presidio, Deb Scott, Ashley Shuler, Lloyd Tucker, Daryl Washington, Jenna White, Lisa Williams

Discussion Items – Identifying SCYPT Priorities

Following the February SCYPT meeting, the Executive Committee determined that the three existing SCYPT areas of focus – school readiness, behavioral health, and community schools – should remain so. The Executive Committee also identified workforce readiness as a new area of focus for the SCYPT. At the April meeting, the full SCYPT heard short presentations on each of the four priority areas. Members then joined one of four breakout groups to discuss the issue of their choosing, with the goal of developing consensus on setting SCYPT priorities for the priority area. The four groups then reported out to the full SCYPT, allowing for some feedback and questions. The summaries below capture the discussions by topic. The SCYPT Executive Committee and staff will work with existing work groups, or establish new work groups, to incorporate SCYPT-identified priorities into their work. Those work groups will return to the SCYPT with recommendations.

Four themes were consistently brought up, regardless of the topic. All issues should be addressed through a racial and social equity lens, be addressed through a trauma-informed lens, maximize family engagement in the development of strategies, and consider new federal funding opportunities that may be available as part of pandemic relief and recovery.

Discussion Item – School Readiness Priorities

Anne-Marie Twohie, of the Office for Children, provided the overview to the full SCYPT. She highlighted some key accomplishments related to the Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan and the recommendations of the School Readiness Resources Panel (both are plans endorsed by SCYPT). As potential next steps and SCYPT priorities, she recommended the SCYPT consider supporting the County's participation in Virginia's Unified Early Childhood System, continuing expansion of access to quality early childhood experiences, endorsing the establishment of a parent/family advisory council, identifying new funding for the Early Childhood Birth to Five Fund, endorsing future bond referenda for capital construction, and further implementing the School Readiness Resources Panel recommendations.

The breakout group recommended that the SCYPT's priorities should include funding and policy recommendations to:

- Prioritize equity throughout the development and implementation of strategies;
- Ensure that planning and implementation is inclusive of families; partner with parents, caregivers, and educators in a culturally responsive manner, and bolster enrichment for and build the capacity of parents and educators to advocate; establish a parent/family advisory council, and/or consult with existing parent councils representing marginalized communities and populations;
- Seek new and diversified funding including a future bond referendum for early childhood classrooms and facilities;
- Provide access to more flexible early childhood program opportunities; develop innovative uses of community facilities and spaces for programming, co-located services, and strategic partnerships; and
- Ensure staffing support for further implementation of the SRRP recommendations.

Group members also raised important points for consideration, including the need for:

- Funding for additional early care and education slots;
- Expansion, equitable access, and evaluation for current major programs; and
- Development and use of data to evaluate how existing systems and structures are contributing to inequity in access, quality, and utilization.

Discussion Item – Behavioral Health Priorities

Jim Gillespie, of the Community Services Board, and Peter Steinberg, of Healthy Minds Fairfax, provided the overview to the full SCYPT. They highlighted some key accomplishments related to the Children's Behavioral Health Blueprint, now known as the Healthy Minds Fairfax Blueprint, including covid-related responses and initiatives. As potential next steps and SCYPT priorities, they recommended the SCYPT consider the development of a new children's behavioral health plan provide an accessible, equitable and affordable continuum of community-based behavioral health care for children, youth, and families; and to develop a crisis and crisis prevention plan.

The breakout group recommended that the SCYPT support the development of a new behavioral health plan that is inclusive of crisis services. The new plan should be more concise than the existing blueprint, focused on three to five goals, and should include a mapping of current child/youth services to identify gaps and to determine if we need more resources, or if we just need to expand on what we have and use existing resources more flexibly. The plan should emphasize accessibility, equity, and affordability of services. Additional group feedback included the following:

- We need to be able to pull together a team to staff crisis response cases in real time.
- Case management and care navigation should be another focus of the plan, particularly as they relate to crisis response services, helping families make the connection between service providers, and finding residential placements and getting good residential outcomes. New models for case management and care coordination should be explored.

- The plan should focus on providing quality services equitably. We still have “mental health deserts.” We should explore the use of County space to bring more affordable private providers to areas of the county with limited access.
- The plan should emphasize increasing access through school-based mental health services and services accessed through school referrals to community providers.
- The new plan should include family voice, and should apply a trauma-informed lens to all of the areas of focus that are identified.

Discussion Item – Community Schools Priorities

Mary Jo Davis, of FCPS, provided the overview to the full SCYPT. She noted that the community schools committee met from 2017 through 2019 to develop a countywide framework for community schools. As a result of SCYPT’s pandemic-related pause, the framework has not yet been endorsed or fully implemented. There are three current community schools, at Whitman and Glasgow Middle Schools, and Mount Vernon Woods Elementary School. FCPS also has submitted a grant proposal to implement two new sites in Herndon. As potential next steps and SCYPT priorities, Ms. Davis recommended the committee finalize the proposed framework for SCYPT endorsement, and will be seeking SCYPT feedback on site selection criteria and processes and program coordination and structure.

The breakout group recommended that the SCYPT community schools committee reconvene to finalize its recommendations and ensure an informed community school selection process. The group was comfortable with the recommended general approach to prioritizing sites and with the recommended coordination structure. Additional guidance and suggestions included:

- Carefully consider measures of poverty and the variations and nuances associated with federal poverty level, free and reduced meal eligibility, and other indicators.
- Other potential indicators for use in site prioritization could include school leadership turnover, food insecurity, third grade reading levels, medical home access.
- Provide a clear understanding of who is responsible for providing trainings regarding system navigation/access, needs assessments, and available resources.
- Convene staff and partners from the three community schools for a conversation about what they feel would have been useful when they started their work. This would help determine what supports/trainings future community schools will need.
- Provide a clear understanding of how new sites are launched, including family, staff, and community engagement and communications.

Discussion Item – Workforce Readiness Priorities

Sloan Presidio and Michael Becketts provided the overview to the full SCYPT. They described a wide array of programs and services offered through FCPS, Fairfax County Government, and community partners. About 20 percent of FCPS graduates do not continue directly to college. About one percent of FCPS students drop out of high school without meaningful plans for employment or continued education; Hispanic students – most of whom are English language learners – disproportionately drop out. They recommended the SCYPT adopt a scope of work for

workforce readiness that focuses on a collaborative approach to developing a coordinated system to ensure all youth have pathways to meaningful employment after high school.

The breakout group recommended that the SCYPT prioritize engaging and connecting students who do not enroll in college after high school and re-engage school-age and adults who have not yet completed high school to ensure they have opportunities to obtain meaningful employment that allows for self-sufficiency. The group provided guidance and suggestions:

- Ensure a focus on addressing barriers for undocumented individuals and English language learners, as they are disproportionately affected, and undocumented immigrants are often ineligible for programs.
- Consider how job and opportunity loss during the pandemic has impacted the issue.
- Braid the various systems to create a stronger and more cohesive and coordinated approach. Utilize existing and new resources to expand service access.
- Engage and coordinate with out of school time providers as key partners and providers.
- Build on the many programs, services, and initiatives that are currently available.
- Ensure the plan emphasizes current and future job opportunities in Fairfax County.
- Ensure the plan includes not just training, but movement into jobs. Employment should be a key indicator of success.
- The current study of FCPS career and technical education will result in relevant recommendations and implications for this work.

Discussion Item – My Brother’s Keeper

Telaekah Brooks gave an overview of the My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) initiative. MBK was initially created by the Obama Administration, and is now promoted and coordinated through the Obama Foundation. MBK is designed to create community-level collective impact efforts to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color. The goals of MBK align with those of the SCYPT. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has asked the SCYPT to “facilitate a partnership between Fairfax County and the My Brother’s Keeper Alliance to make Fairfax County an official ‘My Brother’s Keeper Community.’” The SCYPT will convene a committee to develop a timeline and scope of work, then report back to the full SCYPT. There are a number of steps to become an official MBK community, including hosting an “action summit.”

SCYPT Member Announcements

Megan McLaughlin shared the School Board’s excitement about FCPS plans to increase in-person student instruction from two to four days. Stella Pekarsky noted that FCPS is planning for a full five-day in-person instruction in the fall. Frances Ivey said plans are being developed and will be presented in May.

Public Comment

Norm Hall shared his concern that guests (non-SCYPT members) were not able to sit in on the SCYPT breakout groups. By not being able to hear those conversations, the public is not able to

fully address the context of SCYPT decisions during public comment. He also stated that school-age child care and day care issues remain a significant concern for families, especially with summer approaching. He noted that a data-driven approach to identifying gaps and ensuring child care needs can be effective and help families schedule their summers.

Mark Emery, the FCPS Middle School After School (MSAS) Program Coordinator, noted the MSAS program was mentioned during the workforce readiness conversation. He stated that MSAS could help expand career and technical education (CTE) offerings in the county. Workforce development and CTE have been priorities of after-school programs nationally, and statewide after-school networks have developed and shared relevant resources.

Avi Dey submitted comment by email, and Jesse Ellis read it to the SCYPT (unedited comment below):

As resident of Providence District, Fairfax County, for 20 years in a TH community, I have been concerned in my community service work for a long time as it applies to planning & young people "culture challenges" relating to (01) County's "Green Fairfax" initiative and (02) One Fairfax Initiative (recent Add-On Task Force Report 2021 "Equity & Opportunity"). Both of these 2 high priority topics in the context of "young people" outreach & connectivity relating to "Concepts for Future Development" 2021+ needs further communications via existing protocols in small group & staff linked communications for wisdom-based implement 2021 ++.

First of all, Providence District is a very desirable & high-quality neighborhood now. It has evolved successfully as a densely populated, diverse "high rent" district for many years past, with the Vienna Metro anchor about 10 years or so ago. However, many young adults and others who work here (at or near minimum wage jobs) at the foodies, retail, service at the urban hub such as the "successful" Mosaic Merrifield (now at Phase II at Fairfax Circle) can't afford to live here.

Live near work & participate meaningfully with nearby neighbors, friends & family is a highly desirable goal these days for all, no matter what income level & ethnicity of the person or family!! But the upper income condos and apartments at Mosaic phase I are fully rented now. And if one visits the Mosaic Hub on a Friday night 8:00 PM, as I and my family do, for foodie or shopping, the place with the "Mosaic Green" public congregation space is humming with "connectivity" for young adults as well as inter-generational family space that I often see here in "good weather" particularly.

So this MM Fairfax Urban Hub and smaller variations & neighborhood ethnic voices, needs to be valued, appreciated for other neighborhoods as so chosen by respective residents of other neighborhoods at Fairfax County. But much is yet to be done, to enhance and add to (A) enable "quality life styles at MM Fairfax geo (and also (B) nearby Greater Vienna Innovation District anchored with Downtown Vienna Revitalization Plan, and enable the quality life styles for all, as envisioned by (01) Green Fairfax Initiative and (02) One Fairfax Initiative (with recent add-on of the Task Force Report On "Equity & Opportunity").