

Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

February 2, 2022, Meeting Summary

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

SCYPT Members in Attendance:

Leslie Atkins, George Becerra, Michael Becketts, Michelle Boyd, Telaekah Brooks, Karla Bruce, Judith Dittman, Mark Ginsberg, Kelly Henderson, Jessica Hudson, Frances Ivey, Nardos King, Chris Leonard, Nicole Lehman, Rodney Lusk, Megan McLaughlin, Joe Mondoro (for Dalia Palchik), Sloan Presidio, Chris Revere (for Gloria Addo-Ayensu), Elaine Tholen, Matt Thompson, Lanita Thweatt, Lloyd Tucker, Douglas Tyson, Vernon Walton, Daryl Washington, Jenna White

Administrative Item – Review of Poll on Meeting Times

At the December 2021 SCYPT meeting, a question was raised about having occasional SCYPT meetings in the evening to allow for broader community attendance. The Executive Committee met in January and discussed the possibility of hosting one or two evening meetings a year with the explicit purpose of engaging the community. The Executive Committee wanted additional input from the full SCYPT, and a survey was sent to SCYPT membership. Jesse Ellis reported that, as of the time of the meeting, about 80 percent of members did not have a problem with current meeting times, and larger majorities were in favor of occasional evening meetings, especially to update the community on SCYPT work and to seek input on strategies to address SCYPT's priority areas.

The survey will remain open through the end of February for any SCYPT members who have not taken it. [Results through February 7 are attached](#). The Executive Committee will review survey responses at their March meeting and determine next steps.

Discussion Item – Career Readiness

Michael Becketts shared that the one of the two new SCYPT priority initiatives will be youth career readiness. He explained that the work aligns with one of the recommendations of the Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity, so the SCYPT will serve as the initial convener for implementing the recommendation: *"Engage educators, business, government, and nonprofits, and involving youth and young adults, to align their resources and initiatives to create an education-to-career system that better connects Fairfax's youth ages 16-24 who are not in school or working (opportunity youth) to in-demand careers."*

A small steering committee of staff from Fairfax County Public Schools, the Fairfax County Departments of Family Services and Neighborhood and Community Services, and Fairfax Futures will be responsible for initial planning and convening a larger work group.

SCYPT members and guests split into smaller breakout groups to provide feedback on three questions to help guide the new work:

1. *What issues do you think need the most attention related to this topic?*
2. *What strategies should we pursue related to this topic?*
3. *Who needs to be involved to make this effort successful?*

[A summary of the breakout group responses is attached.](#) The feedback will be shared with the steering committee to help guide the development of the initiative.

Discussion Item – My Brother’s Keeper

Telaekah Brooks shared that the one of the two new SCYPT priority initiatives will be My Brother’s Keeper (MBK). Sponsored by the Obama Foundation, MBK (obama.org/mbka) is a community level collective impact approach to improving outcomes for boys and young men of color. Capital Youth Empowerment Program and Edu-Futuro will co-lead the effort to make Fairfax County a MBK community. They will be convening an initial small steering committee of FCPS and County staff and key partners for initial planning and convening a larger work group.

SCYPT members and guests split into smaller breakout groups to provide feedback on three questions to help guide the new work:

1. *What issues do you think need the most attention related to this topic?*
2. *What strategies should we pursue related to this topic?*
3. *Who needs to be involved to make this effort successful?*

[A summary of the breakout group responses is attached.](#) The feedback will be shared with the steering committee to help guide the development of the initiative.

Jesse Ellis highlighted the overlap between MBK and other SCYPT priorities, including career readiness. He emphasized that there will be strong efforts to coordinate initiatives, and that, in many cases, MBK can be used to help provide a more detailed equity lens to SCYPT’s existing work.

Items Presented by SCYPT Members

Frances Ivey noted that FCPS and County staff would be presenting on community schools at a February 22 School Board work session, with the purpose of getting School Board feedback on the initiative and the SCYPT-endorsed framework.

Public Comment

None

Attachment 1: SCYPT Meeting Times Survey Responses (through February 7, 2022)

26 responses as of February 7. Survey will remain open through the end of February.

Q1: Does the current meeting time make it difficult for you to attend SCYPT meetings?

- No: 81%
- Yes: 19%

Explanations for “Yes” answers:

- I have a meeting every Wednesday from 10:00 am to noon
- Typically, I would answer no, but since the pandemic, I am engaged in additional state and local meetings that I must attend.
- [Because of my job, I] might have certain situations where I cannot join
- My schedule is very complex so finding time is the real challenge.

Q2: If we host one or two meetings per year in the evening, with the purpose of engaging the community, do you think that would be beneficial?

- No: 8%
- Yes: 92%

Q3: If we host such a meeting for community engagement, what should the purpose be?

- Inform the community of the SCYPT’s work and accomplishments: 69%
- Ask for input on current SCYPT priorities: 81%
- Recruit people to participate on committees and work groups: 50%
- Other:
 - I think it should be a blend of the first and second box as well as getting input on other potential goals/focus areas
 - Not only ask for input on current priorities, but learn about the priorities of our diverse communities.
 - I believe the first step is to inform and then move quickly towards a system of receiving input.
 - If we need to recruit, that is fine too. Asking for input may help us determine priorities.
 - If offering an evening option, we'd want to ensure that there is true opportunity for participation, not just an info session. If only an info session, it could just as easily be recorded and then distributed for people to watch when it best suits them.
 - Ask for input on other topics that could benefit from SCYPT attention
 - make it easier for current community volunteer members to attend. Show SYCPT lives out the principals of family engagement by being more aware of community needs.

Attachment 2: Career Readiness Breakout Group Summary

What issues do you think need the most attention related to this topic?

- Data – We need to better understand the target population and identify key indicators that can support timely intervention. Overall, FCPS data show a high graduation rate and high rates of post-secondary enrollment and entrance into the military, but three groups have disproportionately low rates: low income students, students with disabilities, and English language learners. Targeted strategies for these populations will be necessary.
- Existing Capacity – We need to understand what’s currently available, the extent to which it meets needs, and barriers to people being aware of and accessing them.
- Workforce Dynamics – We are facing worker shortages in many industries, and these are projected to increase. What careers will be most in demand – nationally and locally?
- Post-Secondary Options – Be sure to include alternatives to the four-year college track, and begin to create awareness of these options at earlier ages.
- Secondary Options – Be sure to include alternatives to traditional courses of study and diplomas (e.g., career and technical education) and begin to create awareness of these options at earlier ages. Consider FCPS and non-FCPS adult education and workforce development programs and other options for reengaging Opportunity Youth.
- Community Options – Include programs and services from the County (e.g., Department of Family Services) and community-based organizations. Ensure Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-funded programs are included and leveraged.
- Access to Opportunities – Consider how students and families can access programs, services, apprenticeships, internships, etc.
- Two-Generation Approaches – Include families in approaches, providing services that support students and their parents and caregivers.
- Holistic Approaches – Include “soft skills,” decision-making, communication, interpersonal skills; life skills such as financial education; and exposure to different career paths.
- Motivations – Consider what youth want for their futures and provide supports and opportunities to reach them. How do we get students exposed to and excited about opportunities?
- Pandemic Impact – How do we provide supports and services given current safety protocols and business practice changes (e.g., shift to more telework).
- Coordination – With so many programs, services, opportunities, and initiatives available, coordination and leveraging of resources is necessary. Consider alignment with the FCPS Strategic Plan, the Chairman’s Task Force on Equity and Opportunity recommendations, the County’s Economic Success Strategic Plan, the County’s Strategic Plan, the Economic Recovery Framework, Portrait of a Graduate, and others.
- Cultural Relevance – Ensure options are responsive to cultural norms and values, such as generational involvement in trades or remaining in the community.
- Multi-Faceted Approach – A one-size-fits-all approach will not meet individuals’ and communities’ needs.

What strategies should we pursue related to this topic?

- Focus on career opportunities and opportunities for growth, not just jobs
- Paid work experiences for youth
- Job placement services
- Strong messaging and communications to increase awareness of what is currently available and how to access it
- Multiple pathways to career
- Holistic approaches that include additional supports such as child care, housing, independent living skills
- Partnerships with employers to help connect youth with openings
- Early intervention before youth become disconnected
- Destigmatization of certain careers and jobs
- Expanded capacity of and access to FCPS academies and other programs
- Apprenticeships that allow youth to earn money while learning trades or skills
- Connect lived experience to pathways to success
- Ongoing vocational counseling
- Community-based workshops
- Address barriers related to immigration status
- Build on the upcoming Lee Center Innovation model. This model brings resources to the community, so that transportation does not become a barrier to receiving services. The center has partnered with over 17 businesses to offer apprenticeships and job skills, that will eventually lead to a career in those business areas. Part of the program also partners with three local high schools to offer this opportunity to 20 students from each school.

Who needs to be involved to make this effort successful?

- Young people – students and young adults (including Opportunity Youth)
- Parents and caregivers
- Fairfax County Economic Development Authority
- Northern Virginia Technology Council – can help identify key skills the tech workforce needs
- Higher education, including George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College, can provide job training and skill development
- FCPS and Fairfax County, as employers who can hire people to help create pathways
- Out of school time program providers
- Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services – to include mental health services and supports in future considerations
- Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitation – particularly with regards to individuals with disabilities
- Business and labor sectors (unions, construction field reps, people who need employees) – can help identify desired skills and articulate career paths
- National movements and initiatives focused on Black and Hispanic immigrant communities and economic mobility and sustainability
- Ensure we hear from “new voices” in addition to traditional partners
- Intake/System Access – Ensure coordination and a “no wrong door” approach.

Attachment 3: My Brother's Keeper Breakout Group Summary

What issues do you think need the most attention related to this topic?

- Data – We need to better understand outcomes by target populations: Who is impacted, where should we target our efforts, and how do people's lived experiences align with what the data tells us? This can help us prioritize challenges and issues.
- Economic Mobility – It dictates everything (e.g., health outcomes, economic outcomes), and right now there is no pathway to sustainable mobility for many. Many young people don't see a future for themselves in Fairfax and leave the area.
- Juvenile Justice – There are disparities in outcomes.
- Education – There are disparities in school attendance, graduation rates, school discipline, and alternative school placement. Remediation opportunities should be emphasized.
- Geography – There are different outcomes based on place, in addition to race. This should be considered in strategy development.
- Engagement and Ownership – Ensure community buy-in.
- Best Practices – Build on the successes of other MBK communities.
- Community Safety – To what extent are boys and young men of color disproportionately impacted?
- Messaging – We will need to create awareness of opportunities and to explain the initiative and how it benefits the community as a whole.
- Coordination – With so many programs, services, opportunities, and initiatives available, coordination and leveraging of resources is necessary. Consider alignment with the FCPS Strategic Plan, the Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity recommendations, other SCYPT priorities, Opportunity Neighborhoods, Communities of Opportunity, and others.
- History and Trust – Acknowledge the County's history when dealing with males of color. Acknowledge shortcomings and remind communities of successes and contributions from men of color. This will help ensure that MBK is not looked at as disingenuous and would build trust within the targeted populations.
- System Involvement, including mental health, foster care and adoption, special education, juvenile justice – Be sure to address barriers and reduce duplication.

What strategies should we pursue related to this topic?

- Mentoring - Recognize that mentorships can't be casual – they must be intentional and include training and follow through.
- Upstream interventions and strategies to prevent the adverse experiences that lead to system engagement and poor outcomes
- Review systems and policies for root causes that lead to disparities
- Holistic, comprehensive approach that doesn't target just a single system or strategy
- Kids at Hope
- Plan for engagement and awareness. Be flexible in strategies.
- Build on successes of other communities.
- Case managers can help support youth and network among programs and services.
- Understand what is already available and promote access.
- Address stigma related to service access and issues.
- Ensure a trauma-informed approach.

Who needs to be involved to make this effort successful?

- Youth and young adults with lived experience
- Parents, caregivers, families
- NAACP
- FCPS
- GMU, Northern Virginia Community College, local Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Black and Hispanic fraternities and sororities, professional groups, and faith-based organizations
- Community organizations working with children and youth of all ages and families, such as Boys and Girls Clubs