

Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

April 25, 2018, Meeting Summary

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

SCYPT Members in Attendance:

Kimberly Adams, Leslie Atkins, Nanette Bowler, Larry Bussey (for Judith Howard), Tisha Deeghan, Judith Dittman, Alicia Doe, Mark Ginsberg, Kelly Henderson, Cathy Hudgins, Tammy Derenak Kaufax, Chris Leonard, Rick Leichtweis, Jeff McKay, Megan McLaughlin, Mary Ann Panarelli, Fahemeh Pirzadeh, Jeff Platenberg, Brian Ruck (for Ed Roessler), Daryl Washington

Discussion Item – Community Schools Initiative

Jesse Ellis provided an overview of the Community Schools Committee's work to date, a brief description of community schools, and the next steps for the committee. United Way of the National Capital Area will be funding a community school beginning this fall, and has already begun to identify a lead community-based organization. The committee is working to get the program up and running at Whitman Middle School, and is also exploring opportunities to leverage other funding and resources (e.g., Neighborhood Networks, therapeutic day treatment services) to implement a community school at Mount Vernon Woods Elementary School. Both sites would be tied in to the Opportunity Neighborhood Mount Vernon initiative.

Timothy Johnson, Erica Russell, and Erica Louison, from UWNCA, attended the meeting and responded to questions, along with Karla Bruce, Mary Ann Panarelli, and Mr. Ellis.

Jeff McKay raised a concern that Whitman is not physically located within its own attendance area; all students are bused to the school. Would that complicate the ability to have a successful community school and create a sense of community? Mr. Johnson stated that the lead organization will be a non-profit with strong existing ties to the community, to help bridge those gaps. Ms. Bruce stated that the program's emphasis on parent engagement and leadership is key to community schools, and this can help build the advocacy needed to address systemic challenges. Dr. Panarelli explained that the principal, who has demonstrated clear commitment to this initiative, has stated that he does not have problems getting parents to the school; his concerns are about getting the community invested in the school, an issue that community schools are used to working on. Further, the ability to partner and coordinate with Mount Vernon Woods can also help address geographical concerns. Jeff Platenberg noted that several schools in Fairfax County face this situation, and the boundary barrier does not remove the needs of the school's students and families. Rick Leichtweis noted the similarities with a day treatment school model, where students do not live in the area of the school; he stated that a sense of community can be established in those settings, but that it takes focused effort. Mark Ginsberg noted that it is important to incorporate this issue into planning, and to fully engage parents. Kelly Henderson noted that lessons can be learned from how families with children in special education programs have built community even when not in their home school.

Megan McLaughlin asked for the local members of the School Board and Board of Supervisors to be engaged in the process, and Mr. McKay noted that the Fairfax Department of Transportation's Connector should be viewed as a potential resource and partner.

Dr. Leichtweis asked how much it generally costs to operate a school. Mr. Johnson replied that United Way provides, on average, \$100,000 per year to hire a site coordinator. United Way also leverages its relationships and partnerships to attract additional funding and partnerships.

Dr. Leichtweis asked if there are documented outcomes of community schools initiatives. Mr. Ellis replied that studies can be found on the websites of the Coalition for Community Schools (<http://www.communityschools.org/results/results.aspx>) and the Linkages to Learning initiative in Montgomery County, MD (<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/community-engagement/linkages-to-learning/>). Dr. Ginsberg noted that typical non-academic outcomes include family engagement, social/emotional development, community engagement, and health; and that it will be important to immediately establish an evaluation plan for the pilot sites. Ms. McLaughlin stressed that data helps people embrace change.

Kimberly Adams asked if families and staff have already been engaged in the effort. Ms. Bruce responded that the principal at Whitman has a team that has begun conversations, and that community schools have been a topic of conversation within the context of family engagement at Opportunity Neighborhood Mount Vernon. Where we are today really is the result of past parent engagement opportunities, and now engagement is about to increase as the planning gets started.

Dr. Ginsberg warned that other schools and communities may be envious.

In response to a question from Dr. Henderson about maintaining family voice, Ms. Louison described the role of parent involvement on ongoing steering committees for community schools. Linkages to Learning in Montgomery County has robust parent engagement at the site and system levels.

Larry Bussey emphasized working to transition the program to avoid overwhelming staff, given current academic challenges and requirements.

Brian Ruck asked the committee to study how others have handled security issues that may arise when schools are more open to the community.

Tammy Derenak Kaufax stated that the two chosen schools are perfect locations to address needs and coordination issues. This represents a great opportunity to engage the community around Whitman, which is very generous.

Information Item – Youth-Related Activities in the Opioid Task Force Plan

To continue the team's discussion from last month, Jesse Ellis shared a one-page overview of the youth-related activities in the Opioid Task Force Plan, and encouraged members to ask questions about the plan.

Kelly Henderson asked if the plan addressed family-focused resources. Mr. Ellis responded that there are no specific strategies in the current plan, but that it is a “living plan” that includes an emphasis on better use of data, which should drive future strategy development. Tisha Deeghan encouraged family participation on task force committees. Nannette Bowler shared that new federal legislation places a strong emphasis on foster care prevention, and provides opportunities to use funding to support behavioral health care for children and families.

Mark Ginsberg described work being led by George Mason University to both increase research on the issue and to coordinate a regional (Northern Virginia) approach to addressing the epidemic. GMU hosted a regional summit on April 19 and has plans to continue to engage stakeholders.

Leslie Atkins asked about the balance of prevention and intervention initiatives within the plan. Daryl Washington noted that, in addition to the strategies in the education and awareness section of the plan, some of the treatment strategies also contain elements of prevention. The school-based substance use services program, for example, includes prevention components. Mary Ann Panarelli stated that FCPS will be advertising positions for the program shortly. They are currently working with Health Department epidemiologists to implement a statistical model that incorporates multiple data points to best identify the schools for the pilot program. The model includes Youth Survey, school behavioral, emergency department, and other relevant data.

Megan McLaughlin emphasized the importance of data monitoring to helping the community understand the magnitude of the issue, and asked how the communications plan will be implemented. Mr. Ellis replied that a communications team is currently reviewing additional data analysis to ensure targeted communications reach the right audiences. The team is also in the process of identifying an outside vendor with experience in health communications to develop messaging. Funding will support both the development and placement of messages in multiple media.

Jeff McKay stressed that there are still problems with other substance use besides opioids. The purpose of the additional funding is to ensure that opioid-specific work does not divert from other prevention efforts. Ms. Deeghan added that much of the work in the plan will also benefit efforts to prevent other substance use, and that building the treatment safety net for people with opioid use disorder supports the full system of substance use prevention and intervention services.

Information Items

Meeting handouts included updates on the SCYPT Community Engagement Committee, the SCYPT Process Committee, and the Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan.

Additional Items

Jesse Ellis thanked the members for accommodating a full-day SCYPT retreat on June 6 at the South County Government Center. The agenda will include a tour of the Original Mount Vernon

High School, discussion on gang prevention efforts, and discussion on SCYPT prioritization of community schools and opportunity youth initiatives.

Jeff McKay noted that the Board of Supervisors had marked up the budget and is planning to issue budget guidance directing the SCYPT to develop a five-year plan for comprehensive pre-K programming. We should discuss this at the retreat, also. The [language for the guidance](#) (see p. 11), adopted by the Board on May 1, is as follows:

School Readiness

Significant capital and operating funding has been included in the last several years to address the array of school readiness requirements. The County's new Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan incorporates the goals of One Fairfax and represents a deep commitment to and strategies for assuring that all children receive the support and services they need for their optimal development. County, community and school staff will continue to work together to eliminate disparities in access, affordability and quality of early childhood services. As the next step in the process it is directed that SCYPT propose a 5 plus year plan for expansion of the early childhood services with identification of requirements from both the County and Schools to ensure that future budget discussions are informed by specific requirements.