

Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

February 6, 2019, Meeting Summary

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

SCYPT Members in Attendance:

Kimberly Adams, Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Leslie Atkins, Bob Bermingham, Nanette Bowler, Karla Bruce, Larry Bussey (for Fred Grant), Tisha Deeghan, Francisco Duran, Mark Ginsberg, Kelly Henderson, Cathy Hudgins, Frances Ivey, Teresa Johnson, Trevor Steranko (for Ed Roessler), Michelle Leete, Nikki Lehman, Rick Leichtweis, Chris Leonard, Christine Lynch (for Telaekah Brooks), Jeff McKay, Megan McLaughlin, Nandred Navarro (for Judith Dittman), Mary Ann Panarelli, Fahemeh Pirzadeh, Jeff Platenberg, Douglas Tyson, Daryl Washington

Follow-Up from Public Comment at the December Meeting:

At the December 5, 2018, meeting, during the public comment time, Marcella Levine, of ACLU People Power, asked about a report to the School Board regarding Student Resource Officer (SRO) contacts with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). At the time, SCYPT members were unaware of such a report and an update at the February meeting was promised.

Francisco Duran explained that the request had been for an explanation of how SROs interact with ICE, and that the School Board was provided this information via a Brabrand Briefing, a written update from Superintendent Scott Brabrand. The briefing was provided to the School Board on December 7, 2018, and can be found online at [https://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/files/B79324694053/\\$file/December%2018%202018%20-%20Brabrand%20Briefing.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/files/B79324694053/$file/December%2018%202018%20-%20Brabrand%20Briefing.pdf).

Megan McLaughlin stated that the original concerns about information sharing were not fully addressed in the briefing and that she will be asking for additional information at the School Board. Jeff McKay added that the Board of Supervisors is also engaging in additional conversation regarding police and ICE interaction.

Discussion Item – Community Schools Update and Discussion

Jesse Ellis opened the discussion by noting that the SCYPT formed a Community Schools Committee in 2017 to explore opportunities to implement community schools in Fairfax. Last year, United Way of the National Capital Area provided funding to implement a community school at Whitman Middle School. Leveraging that opportunity, Fairfax County, through its Opportunity Neighborhood initiative, supported a second community school at Mount Vernon Woods Elementary School. United Community Ministries has hired site coordinators for both sites, which are now up and running.

A team from Whitman – including Principal Craig Herring, Site Coordinator Delia Montecinos, Social Worker Karisa Gearhart, and Parent Liaison Alain Ramirez – shared updates on how the community school concept is being implemented at Whitman. Following that, a team from Mount Vernon Woods – including Site Coordinator Marcia St. John-Cunning and Social Services Specialist Sheila Pou Perez, from the Department of Family Services Neighborhood Networks program at the school – did the same. Mr. Herring described community schools as a sustainable way to serve more people; too often resources are tied to individual staff who know how to access them, and the community school framework helps to reduce that dependence on a single person and to establish an ongoing linkage to services. He also stressed how important it is to clearly define roles and that space considerations need to be taken into account early on.

Chris Leonard asked how, at Whitman, the program is connecting with the Middle School After-School Program. Mr. Herring and Ms. Montecinos explained that they are very much integrated and that Mr. Montecinos is partnering with the program and helping to identify and bring in new clubs. Karla Bruce suggested using the opportunity of the vacant Middle School After-School Coordinator position at Whitman as an opportunity to align the two programs.

Megan McLaughlin emphasized the importance of having an intentional plan moving forward. She also noted the limited number of school nurses in FCPS and suggested the community school framework could provide an opportunity to increase the presence of school nurses. She asked if the sites were utilizing their school nurses. Mr. Herring agreed that nurses play a valuable role in recognizing patterns and helping to address root causes of student health concerns. He stated that more nurses are definitely needed. Ms. Gearheart agreed and shared that social workers work closely with nurses when possible. Ms. Pou Perez described how they have worked with the school health aide at Mount Vernon Woods to help identify patterns and concerns. Gloria Addo-Ayensu noted that the faith community could be a key partner to helping address health issues, and suggested partnering with the Health Department's new initiative to build the capacity of faith communities to do health promotion work.

Jeff McKay noted that, given Whitman's location as an "island school" (i.e., it is not physically located within its own attendance boundaries), it is really wonderful how they have been able to create a community and be successful as a community school. He emphasized how important youth voice can be to a number of issues, citing a park planning example, and hoped that community schools can be a vehicle for youth leadership and voice.

Michelle Leete asked if the school PTAs had been involved. At both sites, there are plans in the near future to engage the PTA or PTO.

Ms. Bruce described community schools as an equity strategy – helping communities better access resources. Larry Bussey emphasized the need to be trauma-informed and systematic in order to best maximize resources. Cathy Hudgins noted the importance of intentionally planning buildings to provide services and address community need.

Tisha Deeghan noted the challenge common to health and human services: people live in families, and don't divide themselves up by need or age group. We need to better design our services to mirror how people live their lives. Ms. Hudgins stressed that everyone is better off when we serve families as a whole.

Francisco Duran shared advice from school board members in Montgomery County, who said that, for community schools to be successful, communities need to invest in them, think differently about how to design and deliver services, and repurpose existing services and resources.

After discussion, Mr. Ellis provided an overview of the next steps for the committee, which is focused on building on lessons learned from the two sites to establish a systemic approach to community schools in Fairfax. He shared the different components the committee is working on; examples include program outcomes and components, job descriptions, and collaborative leadership structures. He discussed initial identification of the types of indicators that should be used to select schools to be community schools. The SCYPT (and guests) then broke up into small groups to identify what they believed such indicators should be. Their notes were provided to the committee to help inform its ongoing work. Mr. Ellis stated that the committee hopes to return to the SCYPT in December with a full plan and set of recommendations.

Items and Announcements Presented by SCYPT Members

Karla Bruce shared that Fairfax County Government is beginning a [strategic planning process](#) with the community to shape the future together, with a goal to hear all voices and reach all segments of our community. Residents and stakeholders are encouraged to take an online survey and attend one of the upcoming input sessions in February and March, and to share the opportunity with clients, partners, and others.

Jesse Ellis shared that Neighborhood and Community Services is hosting an [Athletic Community Mental Health Symposium](#), focused on youth sports and mental health, on Tuesday, February 26 at 7 pm at the Fairfax County Government Center. The event will feature a panel discussion with local and national experts.

Public Comment

Norm Hall, of the Fairfax County Special Education PTA, commended the systems approach to community schools. He noted that little data related to special education had been discussed at the SCYPT, and that the two community school sites have high special education rates. He asked how special education students are being considered within community schools and how we will know if all student needs are being met. He suggested that understanding special education issues and working with students with special needs be included in community schools-related training, and encouraged further consideration of including school nurses in the model. Mr. Hall stated that he would submit his questions and recommendations to Jesse Ellis, so they could be included in committee discussions and so the committee could engage Mr. Hall.