

Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

June 6, 2018, Meeting (SCYPT Retreat) Summary

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

SCYPT Members in Attendance:

Kimberly Adams, Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Leslie Atkins, Bob Bermingham, Nanette Bowler, Tisha Deeghan, Judith Dittman, Alicia Doe, Francisco Duran, Fred Grant (for Judy Howard), Kelly Henderson, Cathy Hudgins, Teresa Johnson, Tammy Derenak Kaufax, Lori LaBarca (for Ed Roessler), Michelle Leete, Rick Leichtweis, Chris Leonard, Megan McLaughlin, Mary Ann Panarelli, Stella Pekarsky (for Sean Perryman), Fahemeh Pirzadeh, Jeff Platenberg, Sari Raskin (for Eileen Ellsworth), Donielle Scherff, Ipsa Stringer, Daryl Washington

Administrative Item – Approval of SCYPT Meeting Schedule for School Year 2018-19

Without objection, the SCYPT approved a meeting schedule for next year. Meetings will continue to be held on Wednesdays from 10 am to 12:30 pm. Locations are to be determined. SCYPT meetings will be on October 3 and December 5, 2018; and February 6, April 3, and June 5, 2019. Members are asked to hold the entire day on June 5 for a retreat. Executive Committee meetings will be on September 5 and November 14, 2018; and January 9, March 6, and May 1, 2019.

Retreat Presentation and Discussion Items

Board of Supervisors Budget Guidance: School Readiness Plan

The Board of Supervisors recently approved Budget Guidance directing the SCYPT to develop a five-year plan to expand early childhood services. Tisha Deeghan recently met with Supervisor Jeff McKay (who was unable to attend the retreat) to discuss the guidance, and shared Supervisor McKay's advice to the SCYPT. Supervisor McKay asked the SCYPT to consider the following:

We have a rich array of services, but some children and families are not served. If we want to expand access and eliminate wait lists for services, what are some creative ideas to do so? How are other jurisdictions handling this issue? How could we implement a universal pre-K initiative? How does this work fit with One Fairfax? How do we maximize the resources we currently have, and how do we balance and allocate responsibility among the County and FCPS?

Supervisor McKay asked the SCYPT to think broadly, and to understand the Board is not expecting a proposal for FY 2020. If members have immediate thoughts or questions, they should feel free to reach out to Supervisor McKay.

Staff will begin work on this over the summer.

Gang Prevention Plan: Q&A

To continue the team's discussion from March, Jesse Ellis shared an overview of the newly revised gang prevention plan, and encouraged members to ask questions about the plan. Bob Bermingham of Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, and Meredith McKeen of Northern Virginia Family Service, responded to questions.

In discussing prevention efforts, Mr. Bermingham noted that there are different types of gangs; they are engaged in similar kinds of activities, but often to different extents. The same general prevention principles – awareness, healthy relationships with community adults, etc. – apply to all, though. New strategies are needed to focus on “hot spots” of gang activity with more targeted messaging, including what to do when you suspect gang activity or involvement and to counter myths about gang activity and gang life. Ms. McKeen stressed that while interventions have focused on educating kids about the real consequences of gang involvement, newer messaging and intervention also requires approaches for youth who really believe they do not have a choice but to join a gang.

Ms. McKeen also noted the importance of early intervention. We need to work with our partners to enhance early identification of children and youth at risk for gang involvement. However, among reunifying families, very few children are identified by the Office of Refugee Resettlement for social services referral; most are identified when they register for school.

While the vast majority of local gang-related crime is committed by adults, and there is some emphasis at the state level on adults, the local prevention emphasis has been on preventing gang involvement among youth. (Law enforcement is very much involved with addressing adult gang activity.)

Tammy Derenak Kaufax pointed out that FCPS has, over the last few years, changed the curriculum requirements for recently immigrated students, in order to maximize participation and supports.

Francisco Duran emphasized the importance of targeted efforts, but stressed that we should all be careful to not scapegoat or blame Hispanics or immigrants for the gang issue.

Cathy Hudgins reiterated that effective gang prevention also addresses many other issues – comprehensive, family-focused services are critical.

Community Engagement

SCYPT members and guests engaged in table discussions about ways to increase community engagement in SCYPT's work. Notes from these discussions are being compiled separately and will be used to guide a reconvened Community Engagement Committee's work, to begin late this summer. Members (and others) interested in joining the committee should contact Jesse Ellis at jesse.ellis@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Opportunity Neighborhoods Overview and Framework

Karla Bruce and Kristen Brennan, of Neighborhood and Community Services; Mary Ann Panarelli, of FCPS; and Stephanie Hopkins, of United Community Ministries, presented an overview of Opportunity Neighborhoods (ON), including its history, structure, accomplishments, and next steps. They stressed the importance of SCYPT being familiar with ON, as many SCYPT initiatives are implemented through, or in coordination with, ON. As an example, ON has developed structures and processes to engage the community in policy and planning issues. For example, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has worked with ON to help get messages out to the community about transportation projects along Richmond Highway. ON helps residents get to public meetings on the issue, but also taps into existing networks to bring DOT more into the community. ON also helps to educate the community about the issues and build advocacy skills and self-confidence among residents.

Best Practices in Serving Opportunity Youth

Laura Jahromi, of the Forum for Youth Investment and the national Opportunity Youth Network, presented an overview of opportunity youth (also referred to as disconnected youth) and promising practices for serving them from across the country. Judith Dittman noted that there is a great job market in Northern Virginia, but a significant gap exists for young people trying to access those jobs. Jesse Ellis stated that serving this population will be reestablished as a SCYPT priority for the coming year; beginning this fall, a committee will be convened to identify gaps and recommend strategies for filling those gaps and enhancing coordination and efficiency among existing programs and services.