

## Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

### June, 2016, Meeting Summary

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

#### SCYPT Members in Attendance:

Bob Bermingham, Nanette Bowler, Larry Bussey (for George Becerra), Pat Harrison, Kelly Henderson, Cathy Hudgins, Tammy Derenak Kaufax, Rick Leichtweis, Chris Leonard, Jane Lipp, Jeff McKay, Megan McLaughlin, Mary Ann Panarelli, Fahemeh Pirzadeh, Jeffrey Platenberg, Sari Raskin (for Eileen Ellsworth), Lyn Tomlinson (for Tisha Deeghan), Douglas Tyson, Andrew Wehrlen (for Ed Roessler), Darrell White

#### Update on SCYPT Membership

Jesse Ellis noted that most of the vacant SCYPT member positions are still being recruited. Dana Kauffman, the Director of Government Relations and Community Affairs for Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), has been appointed by NVCC as its member. Jessie Georges, the parent representative from the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Policy and Management Team, recently resigned due to a work conflict. Kelly Henderson is taking her place.

#### Update on One Fairfax

Karen Shaban updated the team on the One Fairfax equity resolution and progress on developing a policy to promote social and racial equity. The Board of Supervisors and School Board each adopted the resolution, which calls for the development of policy, in July. Ms. Shaban shared the process for policy development, and noted it will begin in early November, with a kick-off meeting for the leadership team and staff to frame the importance of the work and present an overview of the process. The goal is to have a policy ready to be presented to the boards for adoption in July.

As a point of clarification, Ms. Shaban explained that GARE (referenced on the policy development graphic) is the Government Alliance on Racial Equity, and will be providing technical assistance throughout the process.

The staff team that will be working on the policy already has 30 to 40 people on it; leadership will be trying to balance a need for inclusion with the need for an efficient process. Megan McLaughlin suggested that the leadership group could sketch out a framework for the policy, then the larger group could flesh it out. It would remain a “bottom-up process,” as the leadership group should be informed by the community, best practices, etc. As many people as possible should be engaged in the process. Pat Harrison and Cathy Hudgins each stressed the need to expand beyond the “typical base” in engaging the community. The leadership group will include deputy county executives, Francisco Duran, and Marty Smith (chief of staff to the FCPS superintendent).

Jeff McKay stressed the need for senior management to make it clear to all staff (not just managers) that this is a priority and what needs to happen. Ms. Harrison stated that she will be meeting with Francisco Duran to lay out details of the process. They have been and will continue to emphasize the importance of equity with staff. Jane Lipp reported that it has been discussed with the FCPS leadership team and principals associations, and the next step is to ensure the message reaches staff and faculty in schools. The deputy county executives addressed it with County senior management last month and will work to embed equity-focused communications throughout the process to emphasize the priority on equity and the policy development process.

#### Update on School Readiness

Jesse Ellis and Fahemeh Pirzadeh shared that a team will begin to meet later this month to develop a strategic plan for school readiness. A more detailed update will be provided at the next SCYPT meeting.

#### Action Item – Endorsement of the School Attendance Action Plan Revisions

On behalf of the rest of the Attendance Task Force (Lauren Madigan, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court; Cindy Dickinson and Carrie Mendelsohn, Fairfax County Public Schools; and Kristen Brennan, Chrissy Cunningham, Victoria Kairys, and Jonathan Melendez, Neighborhood and Community Services), Jesse Ellis (NCS) presented proposed revisions to the proposed school attendance action plan. The first three goals of the plan were endorsed by the SCYPT at its June 2016 meeting, and Mr. Ellis noted that the SCYPT has a written summary of some of the implementation work that has already begun.

The proposed revisions are to Goal 4 of the plan. The tiered system of interventions is designed to integrate within FCPS's Responsive Instruction framework/system, which immediately flags students whose academics, behavior, or attendance meet certain triggers, prompting school staff to consider intervention. The revisions also include a series of additional recommendations designed to support the implementation of Goal 4.

Regarding the strategy around advocating for legislative change, Jeff McKay asked if specific changes are needed now. Bob Bermingham said that, after fairly recent changes, he is not yet comfortable recommending specific changes at this time. The strategy in the plan calls for continual monitoring and assessment.

Mr. McKay noted that consistent definitions of excused and unexcused absences is an equity issue, as parent advocacy often seems to be a deciding factor.

Nannette Bowler cited family mental health problems, physical health, housing, and basic needs as the primary family issues that the Department of Family Services is seeing related to absenteeism. Ms. Bowler stated that an earlier trigger to prompt assessment of family issues is needed. Ms. Mendelsohn noted that such assessments are always available; the attendance system simply triggers an examination if other warning signs hadn't been identified. Ms. Bowler stated that a systemic approach to family assessment/services is needed, though, to ensure they happen. Cathy Hudgins added that everything should start with the family and that early intervention and focus on root causes is necessary. After a brief discussion on what the mechanics of such an approach could be operationalized, and a comment from Rick Leichtweis

on the prevalence of anxiety among students missing school, **Ms. Bowler agreed to convene a committee to develop an approach to early screening for family issues and mental health problems. Megan McLaughlin, Mr. Leichtweis, Douglas Tyson, and Mary Ann Panarelli agreed to join the committee, which will be asked to bring a recommendation back to the SCYPT.**

Larry Bussey noted that the Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee has been reviewing data from the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, which cites suspension rates that are disproportionately higher for black and Hispanic students, a disparity that can impact attendance. Also of concern are the large numbers of unaccompanied youth entering the system. Tammy Derenak Kaufax stated that a curriculum has been developed and is being implemented specifically for that population in order to help them graduate on time. Regarding suspensions, Mary Ann Panarelli noted that the Responsive Instruction system also triggers on problem behaviors and that an FCPS team is focused on addressing disproportionality. Progress has been made on closing the gap between black and white students, but Hispanic students are still suspended at a disproportionately high rate.

**With the creation of a team to develop recommendations on early screening, the SCYPT voted without objection to endorse the revisions to the attendance action plan.**

#### Discussion on SCYPT Evaluation

Caroline Rankin, a Data and Evaluation Specialist in the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, presenting findings on an evaluation on the SCYPT's collective impact work based on interviews with SCYPT members, staff, and key leaders from the "collaborative action networks." Four key overall themes emerged: need for greater involvement of community organizations, need for greater awareness among the community at large of the SCYPT's presence and activities, need for better communication and updates on actions among the SCYPT, and the benefit of having a facilitator for meetings.

Jesse Ellis announced that, based on initial reviews of the data by staff and the SCYPT Executive Committee, several process improvements are already underway or will begin soon:

- Staff will work with the Forum for Youth Investment (FYI; the organization providing facilitation and technical assistance to the SCYPT) to develop templates and processes for regular communications to the SCYPT with updates on action planning and implementation. Mr. Ellis will likely be in touch with SCYPT members for feedback and input on proposed strategies.
- In order to limit the amount of SCYPT meeting time spent on presentations, and therefore increase the time available for discussion, staff will revise the presentation template to shorten presentations and will ensure SCYPT members receive full reports, recommendations, etc., one week prior to meetings.
- Staff will work with FYI and the Executive Committee to develop a "consent agenda," allowing the SCYPT to quickly endorse recommendations and strategies that are considered non-controversial with a minimal amount of meeting discussion.
- Staff will convene a committee of communications specialists from FCPS and the County to develop external communications strategies to raise awareness of the SCYPT.

- To more fully engage SCYPT members in planning and implementation, more subcommittees will be engaged.

Elizabeth Gaines of FYI stated that she can share best practices of community engagement, if a committee is interested in forming to work on that issue. **Cathy Hudgins, Kelly Henderson, Larry Bussey, and Karla Bruce agreed to form a committee to develop community engagement strategies.**

Megan McLaughlin asked staff to, when sending information for SCYPT action ahead of meetings, to include in the email key points and a summary of what's being asked of the SCYPT.

Mr. Ellis asked SCYPT members to send him additional ideas for actions based on results of the evaluation and noted that the team will continue to review and address the findings.

#### Announcements

- The FCPS Mental Health and Wellness Conference will be on Saturday, October 29. Jesse Ellis will send details to the SCYPT.
- Data on the SCYPT-identified key indicators for the shared community outcomes are now available within the Community Health Dashboard at [www.livehealthyfairfax.org](http://www.livehealthyfairfax.org). Jesse Ellis will send details to the SCYPT.

#### Action Steps/Assignments

- Nannette Bowler will convene the workgroup on early screening and intervention.
- Jesse Ellis will convene the workgroup on community engagement.
- Jesse Ellis will begin implementation, or engage the necessary people to do so, on implementing process improvement recommendations identified in the SCYPT evaluation. SCYPT members are asked to respond to requests for information or ideas that Mr. Ellis may ask by email.