

**Superintendent's Community Advisory Council
Minutes
Meeting November 28, 2006**

Todd Rowley opened the meeting, and the minutes were approved. He asked Dr. Dale for updates.

Dale introduced Washington Post reporter Maria Glod, who was attending the meeting as part of her "shadowing" of the Superintendent for a profile of him that she was working on.

Dale said that what the School Board was calling "strategic governance" (SG) was not much different from strategic planning. One difference is that SG includes not just goals but operational expectations for all elements of the school system, including support functions. The School Board was to adopt these operational expectations on December 7.

The Board has spent a lot of time discussing how it can continue to maintain quality linkages with the community. An ad hoc linkage subcommittee of the Board has devoted a great deal of time to this at several meetings open to the public. Dale has suggested to the Board that SCAC advise both the Board and the Superintendent.

Board member Kaye Kory was present at the meeting. She noted that the linkage committee's agenda and meeting times are on the Board's web site. The committee is working on plans to better disseminate strategic governance goals and to communicate better with the community about them. The future of School Board advisory committees is part of these plans. Two other Board members have visited and evaluated meetings of advisory committees. This year is the transition year; advisory committees will stay in place this year. She asked that the community tell Board members how community members think advisory committees can operate best.

Dale pointed out that academic expectations are the most important and that Ann Monday was here to discuss them.

Monday distributed materials on academic goals and indicators
[LINK HERE }

Monday discussed the work that went into developing her department's "reasonable interpretations" of each School Board goal. The department's first try was not acceptable, but, eventually, the department and the Board reached agreement. She said the goals and interpretations as they now stand make FCPS responsible for each individual student having the opportunity

to realize his or her potential. We must help every student identify his or her strengths, talents, and interests and plan his or her education with those in mind.

Monday said that when her staff developed indicators for the academic goals, the staff members recognized that there are desirable academic outcomes that are very difficult or impossible to measure but that data points on these could be collected.

Under these indicators, each student would develop an individual learning plan over time. FCPS will begin implementation of learning plans at the secondary level and then move implementation into the lower grades.

Foreign language proficiency measures will be first assessed in the upper elementary grades; limited-English proficient (LEP) students who are learning English usually can learn another language more easily than monoglots. A global awareness-technology pilot will begin in middle school.

Todd Rowley asked for a definition of "technology" as used here. Monday said this technology would be used as a learning tool.

Eileen Kugler asked if there was research indicating that knowledge of a second language made learning another language easier. She suggested that FCPS might be used as a laboratory to study this hypothesis.

Dauaius Unwalla asked if the indicators were weighted. Dale said this had not yet been discussed.

Claudia DeBose asked if the home languages of LEP students would be supported. Monday said this would depend on what language each student's school offers.

Janet Burns asked how the learning plans would work. Monday said the individual student would drive the plan. Implementation will begin at the high school level, where guidance counseling offers an existing program to build on, and then move down to earlier grades. Every student has strengths, which the learning plan will help identify. Burns said it is critical that this move down into earlier grades. Monday said yes but that we do not want to start tracking students, so we must be careful with implementation in early grades.

Brenda Greene said she was excited that the plans will look at the positive in each student but added that teachers are not trained for this.

Charlie Dane said students also need to know where their weaknesses are. Monday said there are high baseline proficiencies for all students and that the strengths come in beyond this baseline.

Monday said an arts benchmark pilot will begin in upper elementary grades. The approach here will not be competitive, but those implementing the pilot will try to determine what can be benchmarked at the elementary school level.

In middle school, Monday said, FCPS will track students taking Algebra 1 by eighth grade.

Kory asked whether middle school students would be studying to prepare for careers. Monday said a separate course is being considered, but career exploration should be integrated into the curriculum.

At the high school level, a postsecondary planning tool will be developed. A service-learning pilot will be developed in 2009-10, using the learning plans to ask students if they have met their individual goals.

Rowley asked if the class of 2010 is already doing post-secondary planning. Monday said part of this will be in high schools next year. She said "Naviance" is the name of the student-driven tool that will be used for this.

Andrea Sobel said it is good that existing programs are being spread through schools.

Katie Lynch said she was using Naviance in her school to provide a computer-based inventory. Monday said the culture- and language-based differences as well as computer-access issues need to be worked on.

Ginger Shea asked if this would mean extra work for already overworked elementary school teachers. Monday said that elementary school principals are concerned about this but that it will be some years before this will be in elementary schools, so we can probably, by that time, develop something that is not a burden.

Nell Hurley said we should start collecting data on graduates' postsecondary experiences now. She asked if it is realistic to ask immature ninth graders what their postsecondary school goals are. Why not ask parents? Monday said that most young people actually do want to talk about the "real world."

Jeanine Martin said she would like to see more post-secondary information beyond grade-point averages. Are our graduates really prepared for math, engineering, etc.? Does FCPS discourage dual enrollment in high school and college? Dale said he encourages it. Monday said that dual-enrollment courses need not take place at college campuses; professors can come to the high school, or high school teachers with appropriate credentials can become adjunct professors. FCPS does have partnerships with colleges.

Ellie Ashford asked how FCPS would use assessment results. Monday said we would aggregate data by school, FCPS, and ethnic subgroup to help determine schools' success. Greene said there are organizations that will track postsecondary achievement so that FCPS could compare results, for instance of AP vs. IB programs.

Monday said that principals are getting the message that the School Board's academic goals mean that the SOL tests will not dominate everything. Principals want to believe this, but they need reassurance. Green said the trust issue is key.

Dane asked why world history is crammed into grades 9 and 10. Monday said many other school systems have only one year of world history.

Kugler said she thinks student goal setting in second grade could lead to too much intensity at a young age. She told the story of her son who is now an opera singer but did not discover this direction until high school. Monday said the schools would be very gentle about this in the younger grades, concentrating on "learning habits," not what students want to be when they grow up.

Kugler said that the service learning needs to be connected to something students actually believe in.

Kory said we would be helping students to think about their future.

Emeka Ezidinma said that in his village in Africa most parents had not gone to school but knew that school is the place children could learn.

Unwalla asked if Naviance is web based. Monday said it is.

Dale said the teacher perspective on this is to ask whether the Board is serious about the new goals.

DeBose asked how these goals related to gifted and talented and other special programs. Dale said he could not see any differences for special programs.

Greene asked where the Board and staff members were with goals 2 and 3. Dale said the staff is currently working on fleshing these out (e.g., developing "reasonable interpretations" of each goal). He expects there would be more two to three months from now.

Rowley asked for members' issues.

Eileen Filler-Corn said that she had discovered there are 1,200 homeless students in FCPS. She has volunteered to help some of these kids, getting them into schools and keeping them at the same schools.

Laura Floyd said that Terri Hicks, principal of Virginia Run Elementary School, had done a great job getting information to her community through the Keep in Touch system when a well-known teacher had been killed.

Lynn Terhar noted that the federal Department of Education had rejected FCPS use of the SELP test for LEP students but that FCPS is appealing this along with the state of Virginia and other school systems.

Hurley asked if the current transportation study was considering effects on rush hour traffic of different school start and end times. Dale said those doing the study had not been asked about this.

The meeting was adjourned.