

Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee Meeting Notes

November 9, 2022

Members in Attendance:

K. Amenabar	Q. Craig	A. Janan	D. Quan	D. Walker
S. Ashok	M. Dickey	M. Lavalle	E. Rodriguez	K. White
G. Becerra	C. Farrish	V. Long	N. Samaniego	
J. Bensinger	S. Frank	L. Mondragón	R. Shaw	
E. Bonhomme	L. Henry	E. Osborne	A. Smith	
H. Capps	L. Henson	R. Pérez	M. Vereb	

26 members were present. Quorum was met.

Other Attendees:

K. Haynor	J. Henry	K. Keys-Gamarra	M. Mason
N. King	A. Hunter	J. Kwon	S. Presidio

6:30 pm Welcome and Updates:

New Members, Laura Mondragon, representing Fairfax Association of Elementary School Principals and Lynette Henry, Member At-Large were introduced.

6:40 pm Memorial Award Proposal:

A draft proposal for the Dr. Lawrence Bussey Memorial Equity Award was shared with the membership. G. Becerra motioned to accept the proposal. V. Long seconded. Discussion was held regarding the timeline and possibly adding more time for people to make nominations. Several questions about who is eligible (staff and community) and wording of the criteria were clarified. Ms. Keys-Gamarra suggested combining the announcement of the award with the School Board resolution recognizing Dr. Bussey. The motion carried with full support.

Dr. King moved to write and support a SB resolution to recognize Dr. Bussey. The motion was seconded and the passed with full support.

6:55 pm Presentation from the FCPS Superintendent

Dr. Michelle Reid addressed the committee, responding to questions that had been submitted. The notes below are a summary of the main ideas expressed.

1. Looking at the system with some outside perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of FCPS? What would you like to preserve and what are you hoping to change?

The strengths are the traditions around PD. Time and sub shortages are forcing us to see how we do PD differently. One thing I would hope to change is a lot of asynchronous computer modules for PD. I don't hear fabulous feedback on that from any levels. There's a feeling that they're not getting the same level of interaction and there are so many that are repetitive year after year. I want to be really intentional about our work. This afternoon we looked at discipline disproportionality – what we're trying to do is find and create systemic tools to do something about it. We are now working with CAO, CEO, IT and getting data in real time and not waiting until the end of the year. It's like teaching, you have formative data in the classroom and summative data at the end of the year. That is not actionable. I hope to look at data in real time and do something about it in real time. It's a game changer. I'd love to preserve the energy our educators. They want to do good work.

2. FCPS continues to have issues hiring and retaining Black, Hispanic, and Asian teachers. What are your plans to increase the hiring & retention of diverse teachers and administrators?

We want to be poised to be very nimble. There are people being laid off in lots of areas, tech for example. What's one company's concern can be our benefit. Listening to the experience of our educators. Word of mouth is our greatest recruiting tool. If people are respected and well treated, they will want to work here.

3. Black and Hispanic students as well as students with disabilities are found to be disciplined more harshly than their peers. How will you address discipline disproportionality?

We looked at this data today actually by school, by region, and by division. Also by demographic groups and by infractions. Are there certain schools that have more disproportionality? We want to look at this in real time and interrupt right now, not wait until the end of the year. We could send teams out to support. Having all of this data every 2 weeks, we'll be able to provide support to be able to intervene in real time.

4. FCPS has a significantly higher proportion of students receiving ESOL services, especially recent immigrants, than your previous district. What are you doing to inform your practice about multilingual learners and what are your thoughts on ways to support their achievement?

My leadership coach is a former superintendent in TX and has provided a lot of information on ESOL strategies and our FCPS ESOL department is doing so much. Selecting curriculum that is relevant, after school programs, there's debate on newcomer academies but it is a powerful model that several states have used. Some states have required an ESOL credential for all teachers. There are a variety of bodies of work that have been found to be quite successful. There are so many possibilities with the proper training, we can do amazing work.

5. How is the work on the new Strategic Plan informed by the Equity Policy being drafted at the request of the School Board?

Muti (Fagbaji) is consulting, and CEO team is working with them to align. Equity is the center of Muti's work for a lifetime. We have to be able to talk about our truth and be a lighthouse for our nation. The Strategic Plan and Equity Policy are complimentary, separate bodies of work. There are researched measurements that lead to equitable outcomes for students. We need to be really clear that once we identify them, we will have better outcomes for our students.

6. In the 2021-22 MSAOC Annual Report, we advocated for a permanent Chief Equity Officer, what is the status of that position?

I really wanted to wait until the end of my first year. I want to get the lay of the land until I make my first move and I want to be sure to be thoughtful but there are no plans to make any cuts.

Additional Questions asked in person by members of the committee were:

1. What is CRT and are we teaching it in FCPS?

We don't teach it in FCPS it is a graduate level course taught in legal studies. It's become a lightning rod in political circles. I like to talk about what we are doing not what we are not doing. I think we need to remain justice focused, people centered, and student driven.

2. One of the things I've seen is that the system is good at communicating via email but what does the system have in mind to reach those we are not reaching?

Multilingual learner's families often like text and for those that may not have literacy in their home language it could be through video but that still needs to be sent electronically. Word of mouth through Family Liaisons and influencers in the community or others who have networks of communication. We don't have the best strategies always, and then there are people who are just busy. When people have a reason to be somewhere they will show up and if they can't I don't know if we have been very successful and I'm open to your ideas. We have to also think about non-traditional roles like bus drivers for example. I think the

most direct path is to the student. Sometimes we need to lean into going to students directly. We have to create more sure pathways, so it doesn't rely on a third party (invite, fee, form), it creates a barrier for some students which others don't have because a parent does it for them. We have to look and see what is necessary and if things are not necessary, why do we have them?

3. There is often a question as to whether we are harming academic excellence if we are focused on equity. How can we help craft messaging that shows why academic excellence is justice centered and must be combined to produce the excellent student?

We can't talk about justice centered schools in a zero-sum conversation. If it's an either or someone feels a loss. The truth is that when all students have opportunities to achieve hopes and dreams and have access to programs, everyone benefits. I think of neurodiverse students who were intentionally recruited by Microsoft because they think differently. The messaging that has to be clear is that it's not some people lose and some people gain. When we do a good job at educating all of the children, everyone gains. If we can center on what we do agree on which is that public education is the most important work in the country right now and each and every student has access, everyone benefits. It's been twisted to be either or and when you create those binary zero-sum conversations it creates polarization. The messaging for me is about our Strategic Plan which is going to guide our work.

4. What are your thoughts about the Young Scholars model?

I don't know a great deal but did visit several sights this summer. I think the intent is laudable to provide academic supports to young potential scholars. I'm not familiar with the data about if it's at every school and how young people are chosen for it so I will make a note of learning more about it. I'm familiar with the national model. I take my cues in this area from Dr. Donna Ford. She has done groundbreaking work around this the topic of representation in gifted education. She's done work for the office of civil rights. I think she would argue with those who want to completely dismantle gifted programs, in many states it's a student's right. She holds divisions accountable to 8th grade algebra and our data is still evolving here and is a point of interest. I would love to have Dr. Ford visit us and look at our data.

George Becerra thanked Dr. Reid for acknowledging Dr. Bussey's passing. Micheline Lavalley stated the importance of making schools a place of belonging and a home for families. She added that we have to do a better job of family engagement and that family liaisons are still part time hourly.

7:50 pm Subcommittee Assignments and Work Time:

Kim Amenabar shared the subcommittee assignments based on member preferences. The groups are:

Partnership and Engagement – M. Lavalley (Chairperson), A. Janan, S. McKinney, L. Mills, L. Mondragon, G. Nagaraja, E. Rodriguez, N. Samaniego

School Environment – (Chair TBD), S. Ashok, M. BenOmran, H. Capps, Q. Craig, S. Frank, K. Kardelis, S. Mascoll, P. Simpkins, T. Temple

School Operations – R. Shaw (Chairperson), J. Bensinger, L. Henson, A. Mukuna, E. Osborne, L. Peterson, D. Quan, D. Walker

Teaching and Learning – L. Henry (Chairperson), Z. Bashir, E. Bonhomme, M. Dickey, V. Long, R. Perez, A. Smith, M. Vereb

Groups met to decide on a subcommittee chair and begin discussions of specific areas of inquiry and focus for the annual report.

8:15 pm Committee Business:

- Approval of October Meeting Minutes – G. Becerra moved to accept the minutes. E. Osborne seconded and the minutes were approved with all in favor.
- Dr. Nardos King, Chief Equity Officer and her team will be presenting at our next meeting. Committee members may submit questions for the CEO via email to Kim Amenabar prior to Friday, November 18th.

8:30 pm Call for Motion to Adjourn:

E. Bonhomme moved to adjourn the meeting. M. Dickey seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: December 7, 2022, 6:30pm