

DAC Meeting Minutes

Date: 11/8/17, 5:30pm

Location: KCPS BOE Building

Meeting called to order by Miriam King, Acting DAC Chair

- Welcomed everyone
- Notified parents that child care was available during the meeting
- Introduced Yantezia to act as the Moderator for the education panel discussion

Yantezia Patrick, Parent and Family Engagement Specialist

- Explained she will moderate the Education Panel and noted the panel as a way to move forward on two key goals:
 - Providing KCPS Parent Education opportunities
 - Working to improve KCPS student performance
- The panel will receive questions from the moderator and meeting audience
- Introduced the five panel members and that each would give a brief intro
- Panelists:
 - Kevin Masters – KCPS, Manager of Government Relations
 - Dr. Luis Cordoba – KCPS, Chief of Student Support Services
 - Cokethea Hill – Direct of Community and Family Engagement with School Smart KC
 - Angela Turrentine – KCPS Parent Liaison at Garfield Elementary

Panel Q&A session:

- Moderator Question to panel- Describe the importance that parent engagement plays in your daily work?
 - Cordoba- *If parents are not involved, my job is much more difficult. I fully understand the strain on working parent's time, but if parents will commit just 5-10 minutes at home working with their children's school activities it will make a difference.*
 - Masters- *Government advocacy and economic development are key to my job. I interact regularly with government and business leaders. We need a lot more family engagement to help remind government and business leaders that they work for the parents and tax payers. We need to communicate to those leaders the importance of spending more tax dollars on education and libraries as opposed to tax breaks to for-profit business ventures.*
 - Hill- *I was on a city council. We need to find new funding collaboratives to improve schools. We need that parent voice that Mr. Masters talked about. Empowering parents is essential for student success. Furthermore, high impact programs will help move education forward. Efforts need to be made to build capacity for teachers connecting with parents and schools partnering with parents.*
 - Turrentine- *As a parent liaison, I act to bridge the communication gap between the parent and school. My work involves being a parent advocate, help schedule events, and visit families at their homes. Currently weekend activities are available for students needing help, when regular school time is not the best fit.*
- Moderator Question to Hill- How do you address issues where teachers don't necessarily share their students background or culture?
 - Hill- *We do recognize the issue that teacher diversity is not matching the student body diversity. We are working to provide teachers with culturally sensitive training and to help them recognize their own biases. Teachers need to understand both their student's and parent's life experiences. Furthermore, teachers must learn to connect with parents. It is important that curriculum be framed and designed from the margins. Bottom line is for students to feel a personal caring relationship exists with their teacher.*

- Moderator Question to Cordoba- The district does have student and parent resources, but what would you say is the most underutilized resource in the district?
 - Cordoba- *There are resources available that some parents may not be aware of such as the Community Plaza program. Plaza Comunitaria is a collaboration with The Consulate of Mexico in Kansas City and Kansas City Public Schools. It is a free program that provides adult students who emigrated from Mexico with the opportunity to complete their primary and secondary education through an online learning program. Examples of other services and organizations that are available include mental health, Aid for Peace, Free KC. Parents just need to reach out to get these services. Please feel free to contact me anytime. I sometimes do coffees with new contacts to build those relationships.*
- Audience Comment- The panel members seemed to be very caring individuals. Parents don't see that same sense of caring and attention in their schools. I requested that my child be tested for ADHD, but the district was not helpful. I took the child to a doctor and they identified them with that disorder and so they finally got help. Specifically, Dr. Bedell was very helpful when I called him.
 - Masters- *I have documents available for the audience regarding government contacts that can help students get action on these types of issues. I follow a reward and punishment system where government leaders receive the response depending on whether they do right or wrong. I would like to see DACX help me with these contacts and advocate for students and parents.*
- Audience Comment and Question- My son was also diagnosed with ADHD. He has been kicked out of Longfellow and moved to Success. I have had no parent engagement at that school. Staff have threatened him even though he is just in first grade. Students are walked out of the school in handcuffs, but that shouldn't be happening. No one has ever asked me how they can help me, even though I had noted that he had ADHD at intake. The principal's response to that was that I may have just said that on the form. How are we helping students stay in their home schools?
 - Cordoba- *I have a form for Student Support Services that can help out and we also have a few social workers stationed around the district.*
- Audience Question- We have seen enrollment increase, but not services added to match that increase. How do we get that increased help? Where is the plan to help these students? How can more resources and money be allocated to our schools?
 - Cordoba- *We have had a seven year discussion to move towards trauma sensitive schools. Training staff professionally to not get mad when student problems arise, but to try and understand their issues. Currently we have 5 social workers in each school zone, where each zone has approximately 10 schools. There are also 2 family support specialists in the district. Ideally he would be in support of a social worker and a family interventionist in every school.*
 - Yantezia- *Reminded everyone to be respectful and that the panel is present to assist the families.*
 - Hill- *We are continuing to fight for educational funding to provide these types of resources in schools, by opposing TIF (Tax Increment Financing) agreements between city officials and private businesses because the TIF diverts taxation that would have increased KCPS funds. We have to have more people and parents advocating for those tax dollars for education.*
 - Masters- *We need you advocating to the city to oppose these TIF giveaways.*
- Moderator Question to Masters- In the work that you do, what do you see as the most underutilized resource in the district?
 - Masters- *We have public officials that are responsible for the schools. Those officials in Jeff City and KC City Hall are being engaged, but public education dollars are still being diverted thru TIF agreements. In my job, I help define the KCPS legislative priorities which currently include:*
 - *Funding Pre-K education*
 - *Stop tax dollars from leaving education funding sources*
 - *Leveling the playing field between Charters and Public schools*

A valuable resource for myself and others to use is the KC Clerk website. I visit it on a weekly basis to see what is happening in the city. The www.house.mo.gov website serves the same purpose, but on a state level.

- Moderator Question to Turrentine – There are at least 29 different languages that students bring to KCPS schools. What have you done to help your school and students with these language issues?
 - *I do my work out of love and show the children that I care. I help students with getting lunches and act as an advocate for them. As the school Liaison, I act as an extra support system for them. We have 550 students at my school and I try to build relationships with their families. We ran a “Trunk or Treat” program where students received free books and students dressed as their favorite character from books.*
- Moderator Question to Hill – What do you do to get parents more involved in their children’s education?
 - *Hill- We try to create a sense of fellowship within the school, by making sure the staff welcome and affirm the parents. Thru the Kauffman Foundation, I connect with Samara and Yantezia to try and provide support as they build out a Family Institute. Educational data indicates that parent led advocacy groups is one of the most effective ways to make a difference. Schools need to communicate thru phone calls and home visits.*
- Audience Comment- I have also had trouble getting help for my grand-daughter who has ADHD. She has medical documents that she must do what the school was already supposed to be doing for her, but now I have to file papers all over again. They also need more than just school, school, and school every day.
- Audience Comment- I too have had the same trouble with getting ADHD help. You need to make sure your child has a 504 document which helps assure the school accommodates the child. Further, you need to make sure they have an IDP (Individual Development Plan) on file at the school, which defines their needs. You will have to take this concern to the Principal or Vice Principal or ask the district to do an evaluation of the student.

Closing comments- Miriam King

- If you have any more questions or comments feel free to stay after and talk to the panelists.

Meeting Adjourned