FOLLOW UP MEMO

TO: Members of the Superintendent's Community Advisory Council (S-CAC)

FROM: Debbie Lacy
Patrick Bannon

DATE: December 12, 2022

RE: Follow up to our December 7 committee meeting

cc: Arthur Jarvis, John Harrison, Melissa deVita, Eva Collins

---

ANCHORING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN OUR VALUES

After our initial welcome and overview, we started by going backward – reviewing the notes from our last meeting in order to identify the values that were reflected in our conversations. We were looking for words or phrases that give people focus, and a greater sense of purpose and engagement. Some of the values we identified included:

- Trust
- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Flexibility
- Inclusivity
- Diversity
- Communication
- Hearing the quiet voices
- Student or "user" centered

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In small groups, we identified the values that resonated most with us for building the foundations of community engagement. As part of that discussion, we also noticed what values were missing from our previous conversations. Our foundational values that resonated most were:

- Equity
- Transparency
- Authenticity
- Communication
- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Student / user centered
- Relational / relationships centered

While what we saw in the notes was important, recognizing what was missing created opportunities for us to build an even more comprehensive foundation for our work. What we didn't see was resolution about whether we are transactional or transformational. These guiding principles would also help us to resolve other missing values like clarity of roles, and defined processes that include bi-directional communication and embracing conflict. Whether we act in ways that are transactional or transformational is an object lesson itself in how our underlying values create the foundations of our work.

Frameworks for Successful Engagement

John and Debbie reviewed two frameworks for engagement that were part of our pre-read. Joyce Epstein's framework presents six types of involvement for school, family and community partnerships. And Debbie offered a framework that attempts to answer the question "Who Builds the Table," which centers on co-creation and collaboration as critical to inclusive problem solving. SCAC members reflected on these two frameworks as part of their affinity-based small group work, which led to consensus on the following take-aways:

- Authenticity through flexibility, e.g. timing meetings so parents can make it
- Communication that is accessible, varied to the user
- Clarity and transparency – why are we here, what role are we being asked to play, what part will our feedback play in the decisions and implementation?

Bringing our Values to Life

Our next small group activity provided an opportunity for us to jump-start the work ahead: making our values actionable as a set of recommendations to the Superintendent. We asked ourselves what it would look like for us to operationalize our values. Council members identified many ways in which we could put these values to work:

- Communications that are clear, accessible, translated and messages tailored to the end user
- Engaging community ambassadors to do outreach, education, gather feedback
- Be clear, transparent, and proactive about roles, processes, expectations and goals
- Center the work on students

Working in this way would create more trust and make engagement more meaningful.

Next up

We meet again January 11, at Highland Middle School. At this meeting we will continue to build on the actionable steps we can take to live into our values around community engagement.

MANY THANKS!

Debbie and Patrick