

MINUTES

William Penn Taskforce Meeting (of the Harrisburg School District)
Reflecting Task Force Meeting of Saturday, October 7, 2023, 11 a.m.
Camp Curtin Middle School

Task Force Members Present:

Jody Barksdale
Danielle Bowers
Linda Cammack
Audry Carter
Brian Carter
Melanie Cook
Trina Gribble
Laura Harding
Reynardo (Rick) Hicks
Yvonne Hollins
Brian Hudson
Heaven Poles
Mike Pries
Gloria Martin Roberts
Gloria V. Merrick
Vern McKissick
David Morrisson
Rafiyqa Muhammad
Doug Thompson Leader

Professional Staff (Ex-Officio) Present:

Mr. John Reedy, Chief Operations Administrator, Harrisburg School District
Dr. Marcia Stokes, Chief Financial Officer, Harrisburg School District
Dr. Lori Suski, Commonwealth Court Appointed Receiver, Harrisburg School District
Mr. Eric Turman, Superintendent, Harrisburg School District
Dr. Travis Waters, Chief Recovery Officer, Harrisburg School District

Co-Facilitators:

Elan Drennon
Sheila Dow Ford

Lori Suski convened the meeting at 11 a.m.

She thanked the members of the taskforce for committing their time and talents to the initiative, noting that she selected each person because they possess a skill set and interest in the school district and its children. Further, Dr. Suski noted that the overarching purpose of the task force was to generate recommendations on the best and highest use(s) of the William Penn High School property, which includes the building and surrounding land. She requested that members keep an open mind, and noted that as receiver, she has ultimate responsibility for making any final determination. Dr. Suski then introduced Ms. Drennon and Ms. Dow Ford, who will serve as co-facilitators of the taskforce.

All assembled were invited to address the group, presenting their personal, professional, and civic credentials, as well as the factors motivating their participation. Each commenter emphasized the importance of making their highest priority the well-being of the children of Harrisburg.

Norms/Operating Principles: Noting that this endeavor begins with the conclusion in mind, and that the team would meet for a total of 10 hours over five sessions, the group established two sets of Norms/Operating Principles - one for themselves, and, a second for professional staff - that will guide the manner in which they will work collectively to meet the goal of bringing forth recommendations on the future status of William Penn.

The Norms established are set forth in a separate document, captioned "Norms/Operating Principles," which is incorporated by reference.

Questions regarding Open Meetings: Dr. Suski confirmed that all meetings going forward will be videotaped and posted to the portal on the school district website designated for the William Penn project. The video will serve as a verbatim record of all meetings.

Further, it was acknowledged and agreed that taskforce members are free to use their own discretion in engaging with the public about the meetings and the work of the group. Discussion did ensue around the practicality of having specific inquiries, comments, and concerns posted on the website portal, which is available to all. The objective is to create an efficient manner to get questions and recommendations, comments, and concerns directly to the stakeholders in this process, as well as to foster the greatest level of transparency.

Strengths Team Activity ("Superpowers"): The final activity preceding the tour of the William Penn facility was designed to help team members understand their particular value to this group, and any other endeavor, where their skill serves to build consensus, convey leadership, and help reach decisive, rational decisions even under complex circumstances.

William Penn Walkthrough: A number of the group participated in the walkthrough of William Penn. The activity was designed to give the group a first-person, immediate sense of the condition of the facility. It was agreed that feedback generated by the walkthrough will be gathered at a later date, subsequent to the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2 p.m.

