

CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING/RETREAT

Royal Sonesta, 40 Edwin Land Boulevard, Cambridge, MA
(Skyline BC Foyer)
Tuesday, September 26, 2017
5:00-9:00 PM

Called for the purpose of a Retreat with the School Committee, the Superintendent of Schools and any other invited School District Senior Administrators focusing on District Outcomes and District-Wide Planning for 2017-2018 and beyond, and any other business that may properly come before the Committee.

Members Present: Ms. Bowman (**ABSENT**), Ms. Dexter, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding (**ABSENT**), Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan and Mayor Simmons (**ABSENT**)

Also Present: Dr. Salim, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Likis, Chief Planning Officer (**ABSENT**); Mr. Maloney, Chief Operating Officer; Mr. Clark, Educational Liaison to the Mayor; Ms. Martin, Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Facilitators: John Kim and Sam Ribnick of the District Management Group

Mr. Fantini in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:08 PM.

Mr. Fantini read the call of the meeting and turned the meeting over to Superintendent Salim.

Dr. Salim commented that he wanted to schedule significant time with the Committee to approach the work related to the district plan framework and to have the conversation of working in collaboration to continue progress and monitor projects as well as sharing this data publicly. He reminded the Members that they had talked at a high level in June about having two Outcomes Retreats this Fall and three Progress Monitoring meetings in the Spring and Summer of 2018. He shared that he had reached out to the District Management Group and his colleagues. A two part Retreat is beginning tonight and will resume in late October for us to continue the work. He indicated that he is excited to have a robust conversation this evening.

John Kim introduced himself. He shared that he is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of the District Management Group. He also is on the faculty of the Harvard Business School where he is part of the Social Enterprise Initiative. He also co-chairs and is a core faculty member of PELP (Public Education Leadership Project). Mr. Kim introduced Sam Ribnick who has been the Senior Director at the District Management group for 4 years and has worked with other school districts on strategic planning and implementation. Mr. Ribnick spoke about his background in management consulting and as a teacher of 9th grade Physics in the Boston Public Schools.

Mr. Harding joined the meeting at 5:16 p.m.

Dr. Likis joined the meeting at 5:16 p.m.

Ms. Nolan asked if the smart goals will be defined by the end of October. Dr. Salim noted that there are some measures at this point where the tools to measure haven't been identified yet, so we can't set a specific target right now. Dr. Likis indicated that we may not have this year's MCAS data by the end of October.

Mr. Kim reviewed the evening's agenda, distributed the Cambridge Public Schools District Plan Framework and walked the group through a PowerPoint presentation prepared by the District

Management Group entitled "Setting Targets Within a District Planning Process, Cambridge Public Schools, September 26, 2017 (all on file in the School Committee office):

CPS – Setting Targets Within a District Planning Process (District Management Group)

Our mission is to achieve systemic improvement in public education by combining management techniques and education best practices

DMGroup's mission – Student Outcomes, Resource Allocation, Operational Efficiency

DMGroup partners with districts in three ways: membership, research and publications, and solutions

DMGroup has partnered with hundreds of school districts across the US, helping them address their most pressing needs. DMGroup bring best practices from across the country.

Today's focus is on qualitative prioritization of the outcomes and the next session will draw on district data as we set quantitative targets.

At today's retreat the objectives will be to:

- Review CPS plan framework (on file in the School Committee office)
- Explore effective practices for setting and monitoring outcomes
- Share current individual prioritization of outcomes and reasoning to arrive at qualitative prioritization

Before the second session CPS administration will:

- Gather and share background data for each outcome
- Develop a proposed set of outcome measures based on data and workshop

The October Retreat will focus on the Quantitative targets:

- Review background data and proposed outcome for each measure
- Apply relative prioritization to agree on quantitative outcome targets

Some studies have shown a strong correlation between a district's student achievement scores and effective School Committee practices.

Cambridge Public Schools created a 3-year district plan using DESE's Planning for Success process. 3 Phases: Create Plan – Align Systems – Implement

Under the Planning for Success model, a strong district plan has cascading levels of detail, starting with mission, values and vision:

- Mission
- Core Values
- Vision
- Theory of Action
- Strategic Objectives
- Strategic Initiatives
- Outcomes
- Implementation Benchmarks

DMGroup has a similar strategic planning framework with components that closely align with the Planning for Success elements.

Research and experience in a wide range of districts has shown that good governance is achieved through clear delineation of roles:

Planning for Success Elements

Joint School Committee and District Responsibility:

Mission, Core Values and Vision – Theory of Action – Strategic Objectives – Outcomes

Primary District Responsibility:

Strategic Initiatives – Implementation Benchmarks

With vision, theory of action and priorities completed, the focus of today's session is on setting targets for the Measurable Outcomes which are specific and measurable targets related to district priorities.

When setting outcomes and targets, using the SMART goal framework, can help with future monitoring and accountability.

Articulation of Aspirations enables the district to align around what success would look like upon execution of the strategic plan.

A theory of action is a logical derivation expressing what will ultimately drive success in the district.

Priorities are more tactical areas of focus than aspirations and must be determined with the theory of action in mind.

Strategic planning involves creation of measurable outcomes for each of the priority areas.

Imagine the CPS plan had only one outcome. How would this influence the actions and efforts of staff in CPS? What would the impact be: Outcome: Grade 8 math: Proficiency and growth for:

- An 8th grade math teacher?
- A 5th grade elementary teacher?
- A curriculum director?
- An elementary principal?
- A budget director?

Imagine the CPS plan had only three outcomes. How would this influence the actions and efforts of staff in CPS? What would the impact be: Outcomes: Grade 8 math: proficiency and growth – AP & Honors Enrollment: Proportionality – School climate survey: student, staff, family perceptions for:

- An 8th grade math teacher?
- A 5th grade elementary teacher?
- A curriculum director?
- An elementary principal?
- A budget director?

If all 12 outcomes and 25 initiatives are given equal emphasis, the result is likely to be little influence on staff choices. Staff continue doing what they have done in past years and continue to prioritize effort individually.

To be effective, a monitoring process must create opportunity to redirect effort and resources from lower priorities to lagging top priorities.

CPS Timeline for Progress Monitoring

2017, September – School Committee and administration set targets for outcomes

2017, December – 1st Review, Review progress on implementation steps for plan initiatives

2018, March and May – 2nd and 3rd Review, Review progress and initial data on interim outcome measures

2018, August – End of Year Review, Review end of year outcomes and assess progress on initiatives

Mr. Ribnick passed out Activity Sheet #1 for the Members to complete individually. The Members recessed for a working dinner and completed Activity Sheet #1 in accordance with the following instructions:

Exploring current individual prioritization. How would you like district administrators to prioritize efforts toward these outcomes? Members were asked to mark 2 outcomes as intense district focus and mark 5 outcomes for some level of district focus and mark 5 outcomes for little or not effort for now. Each of the 12 outcomes were posted on the wall and the members using green post-its placed each of their 2 outcomes which they designated as intense district focus on the specific outcome and then placed each of their 5 outcomes which they designated as some level of district focus on the specific outcome. These outcome priorities were compared and discussed among the Members and Dr. Salim, Dr. Turk, Dr. Likis and Mr. Maloney.

- Grade 3 reading proficiency
- Grade 8 Math proficiency
- Algebra 1 Pass rate
- Grade 10 ELA proficiency
- AP & Honors enrollment: proportionality
- College attainment & persistence
- Experience of specific student cohort under the plan
- Percentage of teachers of color
- School climate survey
- Students' meaningful connection with adults
- Chronic absenteeism
- Number/Percentage of student work internships that include community service opportunities and jobs

Every outcome target creates incentives and pressures, which may lead to the intended outcome but can also create unintended consequences.

The debate about setting targets is often a proxy for many important issues that lie below the surface – better to bring them to the fore.

The Members and administrators were directed to complete Activity Sheet #2: Exploring intended and unintended consequences of setting targets.

1. The retreat participants were asked to form a group with a mix of School Committee Members and administrators.
2. They were asked to choose one of the top outcomes and write it in the box on the left side of the page.
3. They were asked to discuss the four boxes on the right
 - Intended results
 - Unintended consequences
 - Consequences of an ambitious target
 - Consequences of a measured target
4. Share out and discuss

The Members and the administrators broke out into 3 different groups and each group worked on a different outcome and then came back to explain the intended and unintended consequences.

After partnering with more than 100 districts across the country, a few lessons were learned (the hard way!)

- Plans are supported best when administrators and School Committee have shared ownership for outcomes.
- For a plan to have impact it must change the way effort and resources in the district are directed – too many priorities undermine this.

- Every goal creates pressures and incentives that lead to unintended consequences that should be explored up front.
- Use goal setting as a time to bring unspoken conflict and perspectives to the surface, rather than merely debating the targets.

Next Steps

- Second workshop in October TBD to focus on:
 - Setting the targets for actual CPS district plan outcomes
 - Training on effective monitoring of outcomes
- DMGroup will send out pre-work for the October TBD workshop

Mr. Harding exited the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Ms. Bowman exited the meeting at 8:52 pm

Mr. Kim indicated that he will capture and share the information from this meeting. He will take all the different view points from tonight and from the Administrative Council as a starting point in the next session. Dr. Salim named some complexities in discussing some of these outcomes since there are a couple we don't have an instrument or tools to measure such as school climate. Related to MCAS specific outcomes, we won't have baseline data for 2017 in October. Proficiency scores haven't been set by the State yet. We will have trend data from previous years.

Dr. Likis asked if we should take tonight's work as permission to narrow the set of outcome measures further from the 12 listed on the Cambridge Public Schools District Plan Framework.

Ms. Dexter asked to slow down this process. She wants to hear the reasons why people prioritized these outcome measures.

Mr. Kim noted that good outcomes are dynamic. He asked if there is another mechanism outside this process to understand why people prioritized the way they did. Maybe this can happen in parallel with these retreats.

Dr. Salim added that they are working on scheduling a second session to this retreat. They will be developing a draft set of prior outcomes based on feedback which took place here and collect data from the administrative council to bring to the next retreat.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Dexter, the meeting was adjourned (9:06 PM)

Judith T. Martin
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Distributed Back-up Documents (copies on file in the School Committee office):

- Agenda
- Cambridge Public Schools District Plan Framework
- PowerPoint presentation prepared by the District Management Group entitled "Setting Targets Within a District Planning Process, Cambridge Public Schools, September 26.