

Preschool Advisory Review Team

February 13, 2014

8:30 – 3:30pm

WECU Education Center

Attendance: Kris Smith, Sharon Missiaen, Emily Teeter, Mike Haberman, Stephanie Korn, Kate Baehr, Cindy Pearson, Trina Hall, Kristi Dominguez, Tammy Koch, Laura Horan, Jen Mallett, Debbie Haney, Kris Craker

Not Able to Attend: David Webster, Kim Walbeck, Beth Nelson, Amy McAuliffe, Gina Ney, Danene Park, Mary Catherine McDonell

Notes:

Welcome: Thanked the group for being here and for representing their constituents.

Purpose of Advisory Review Team: Reviewed the committee charter, purpose, membership, program of work, and desired outcomes. See powerpoint presentation.

Introductions: Members introduced themselves, told who they represent, and shared their reasons for wanting to be on this advisory team. Some of the reasons included the following:

- Create an expansion of the great things that are happening in preschool currently.
- Building on on- going conversation and trajectory
- Integrated preschool, meet the diverse needs of our kids.
- Explore and implement evidence based practices
- More integration creates a more powerful experience.
- Create more collaboration.
- Itinerant staff is spread thin and wants to support the early intervention by increased FTE to cover needs.
- Early intervention is an obvious commitment.
- We're not able to provide many services, particularly in the SLP area. Hope that we are able to provide those services in the future.
- Provide preschool opportunities for a wider base of children.
- We need options for B-3 and more opportunities for all kids.
- Opportunities for kids with special needs to reach their full potential even if they don't qualify for direct services.
- Expanding parent education and partnerships.
- Integrated preschool classrooms
- Private preschool students with BPS students

Purpose and Outcomes for Today:

We are creating a early childhood program that meets the needs of ALL learners; they are all our children; Funding source is irrelevant for today's purpose

Outcomes for today:

- Definition crafted: High Quality Preschool
- Identify Current Reality for the programs we have within our walls

Norms & Protocols

- We reviewed Garmston's Norms of Collaboration and talked about the importance of norms related to how we work with one another during the four meetings.
- Kristi shared work that she did at the Gate's Foundation last week as a part of a state and national work group on defining High Quality Full Day Kindergarten Program.

Defining High Quality Preschools: We worked through a few protocols on defining *High Quality Preschool*.

Details were captured on the charts around the room and are collected in accompanying document, *Defining High Quality Preschools, BPS PreK Advisory Review Team, draft 2-13-14*. Some of the conversation and summary included the following:

- Build a system of support for each other: teacher, parents, students
- "Play" that is purposefully structured with the 5 domains in mind
- Purposeful Learning
- Agreement of what best practices are.
- Alignment horizontally and vertically.
- Early childhood PD
- Need is high quality para eds.
- Pay equity.
- Appropriate space to do whatever the job needs to be done.
- Transportation – program is not dictated by transportation
- Least amount of transition
- Flexibility within the program
- 2 yr/2day, 3 yr/3days, 4yr/4days differentiated model. Blended classes
- Offering programs that support neighborhood schools - continuity.
- Teacher is number one variable to instruction
- Language rich environment:
 - Naturalist conversations
 - World language – cultural diversity
 - Books, print all throughout the classroom
 - Music
 - Training around language acquisition
- Set up opportunities for conversation, conflict, sharing

- PD with community partnership
- Build on the child's interest to create a rich environment
- Environment:
 - Music, art, library, reading, intentional/purposeful language rich, cooking, choice, integration peer models, appropriate least restrictive environment.
- Honor the family as the first teacher
- Sensitivity to vulnerable families – safe environment
- Third-party facilitated learning
- High quality partnership – common understandings and coordination of services. (RTI)
- Partnership problem solving
- Common free time to collaborate: Collaboration structure
- Dedicated staff, support staff, specialist teams (like a healthcare team)
- Assessment:
 - Drives the program
 - Progress monitoring thru IEP
 - Alignment: Horz/Vert
 - Transition Form
 - Simplicity/Simplicity
 - Systems already exist

Review of Think Tank Work: We then reviewed the work from the December 2013 BPS PreK Think Tank, which brought together a wide range of community preschool partners to look at the future of preschool services across our city – working together across sectors.

We looked at the Think Tank notes and summaries in relationship to the work we generated on the HQ charts. Looking for alignment, differences, and items missing, we added to the charts and reviewed their summary.

Lunch Break – Thank you Kris & Bellingham Co-Op for a delightful lunch.

Identify Current Reality: In job alike teams we worked on identifying the current state of different components and perspectives related to our preschool programming.

Groups of job-alikes created charts showing what is working and what areas of concern are. They then shared out to the larger group. Charts will be used at the next meeting to further the current reality, desired state, and drivers and barriers toward such.

Details are captured on the charts. Each team shared out, some of which included the following:

WCC Co-op Preschools:

Not working: low pay, high turnover. Unknown long range ability to sustain due to costs to WCC. Preschool is too expensive for some families. Tuitions have increased. Too few hours for working families.

Working: Inclusion blended model at Sunnyland. Tuition low. Teacher ratio low. Alignment with kindergarten. Monthly teacher inservice. Home visits for new students. Committed faculty.

BPS Special Education Preschools - Teachers:

Not working: Needs a continuum of services. Too many transitions. More flexible schedules. Aligned schedules with specialists. District wide admin support with knowledge of P-5 system. Transportation. Time for planning, assessing, reading data, collaboration with building staff and other preschools.

Working: In school setting, part of school community. Attending neighborhood schools. Dedicated staff. Receiving training in appropriate areas. Multiple preschools within a building. Monthly pre-k meetings – leadership.

BPS Special Education Preschool – Specialists (OT/PT/SLP):

Not working: Not enough FTE. Support staff not available to collaborate. Space – inconsistent. Equal access to school facility – gym, playground. RTI is missing. Funding for equipment. No time to collaborate with families. Inefficient equipment location. Insufficient staffing increases case load later.

Working: Variety of sites with qualified teachers who carry out interventions. District values early intervention. Highly qualified specialists to provide services.

BPS Special Education Preschool - Psychologists:

Not working: Inadequate preschool training. Learning on the job. Bilingual challenges. Disconnect between ELL specialists and psychs. Too many sites and not enough FTE to complete assessment team. No space for testing. Assessment materials are limited. No time for pre-referral and consultation. No time to get into the classroom. No collaborations with other preschool psychs or family engagement. Test and place structure. Does not allow for home visits, observing kids in natural settings. Limited parent communication and offering resources.

Working: Strong preschool teams. Psychs are included on team. Admin ownership of programs. Secretarial support.

Birth to Age 3 Services:

Not working: Capacity. Kids waiting to get in. More work than time. Primary coaching, maybe not enough for complex children. Transitions. Parents are anxious. Communication with families. Early intervention specialist limited support with .5 position. 2.5 year old, 45 day evaluation process. Timelines for state, to be in compliance. Common curriculum based assessment to make smoother transition. Playgroups to connect to neighbors and schools. Staff turn over at Early learning providers.

Working: Strong community partners. Primary coaching model. FRC. Dedicated professionals. Number of kids served now, 77.

BPS Administrators:

Not working: Concern about sustainability. Need for a common vision. Having enough/appropriate resources. Impact on buildings that house special programs. Lack of direct connection to the building with Headstart. Best practices not identical. Schedule alignment. Enrollment increasing throughout the year – number of students changes throughout the year. Expansion of expertise. Different philosophies and parameters in different programs.

Working: Administrative commitment. Innovation . Moving the preschools into the building. District leadership connected with the DTL. Alignment with PD. Developing protocols that lean toward coherence. Resources from the all-day K funding. Students attending their future school. Significant collaborative time (4 day school.)

We will work with these charts at our next meeting to identify drivers and barriers to our desired state.

Closing: We summarized what was accomplished and reminded the group of the context of this work.

We heard from each group member on their reflections from the day. Some take a ways included:

- Encouraged that there is more alignment than realized.
- Appreciated knowing the amount of wide-spread knowledge admin needs to have.
- Strong leadership.
- Kudo’s to Kristi for her solid direction and leadership.

Looking ahead at next meeting, we will meet again on Wednesday, February 26 from 8:30 am – 1:00 pm at the District Office in the Board Room.

Individual members wrote reflections on their tent cards.

<i>Share one thing you learned or are excited about:</i>	<i>What concerns or questions do you have?</i>
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