



PGCPS Board of Education Climate Change Action Plan Focus Work Group

April 21, 2021 3:30pm-5:00pm

Narrative Summary

Committee Chair Pamela Boozer-Strother, Board of Education Member District 3, thanked the members of the workgroup and looked back on the years of progress it took to get us to this point. Valerie Erwin, CEO Liaison to the Board, also provided an introductory thank you from CEO Dr. Monica Goldson.

Facilitator Kate Culzoni at the direction of Pamela Boozer-Strother led the discussion on introductions with a focus on what we would like to see PGCPS look like from the perspective of sustainability in twenty years. Some common themes were innovation, leadership, inclusion, measurability and feedback, intentionality, community driven, clean carbon-free future, environmental awareness, whole health, safety, financial stewardship, and education of students and the community on technology, communication, and civic awareness.

Committee Chair Boozer-Strother discussed the Climate Change Action Plan Focus Work Group resolution with the committee. She pointed out how the news of climate problems and progress in solutions is constant and how all of that will impact our work. We also have a model from the educational equity five year plan that came from a recent focus work group.

Kate Culzoni next discussed a review of the one-on-one interviews that were conducted and described the themes that were used including actionable, measurable, making a difference, overcoming obstacles, buy-in from diverse stakeholders, and development of a network of colleagues. Stakeholder engagement was important and should have students, parents, unions, and underserved communities. Some ideas for engagements were facility walk-thoughts, culturally competent focus groups, student surveys and competitions, and town halls.

Ms. Culzoni then discussed the concept of having guiding principles to guide the workgroup. She also provided some examples to and discussed how we would continue the discussion offline. Councilmember Deni Taveras (District 2 & current Vice-Chair) discussed the importance

of having guiding principles at the beginning of a new process to ground us in consistent core values.

Chair Boozer-Strother then introduced Dr. Alvin Thornton, the former chair of the Board of Education, the leader of the Thornton Commission on Education Finance, Equity and Excellence, and someone who has played a part and seen the changes in PGCPs over many decades. He then presented on the juncture that PGCPs is at now. He began by speaking to the importance of a multi-generational attachment to public education of the children, though expressed some of the challenges that are posed by demographic, economic and other challenges. He expressed that the work group is doing important work and though it is about climate change, it is also about equity and that this work, as the Blueprint for Maryland's Future will require long term, sustainable, predictable, resources. Dr. Thornton stated that we need to figure out how to come together, over our differences, to solve these problems for our children and that this activity we are undertaking as part of the Climate focus work group can create a paradigm to come together to solve the problems facing our children's education. He went on to say that Prince George's did not build one school between 1978 and 1998, nor did we properly fund them, and this affects this work today.

Councilmember Taveras then commented of the incredible statement Dr. Thornton just gave on the plight of African Americans in the school system and brought up the current plight of Latinx students in the system and how we can make sure we solve those problems and not allow Latinx students to go down the same path.

Discussion then turned to the upcoming student forum. The timing is quick in order to get participation by graduating seniors. We want students to know the value in participating so that they are enthusiastic in contributing. Asia Gray, Student Representative, Class of 2021 Flowers HS, mentioned the importance of meeting students where they are, we need to speak in layman's terms. The Green Teams and other environmental clubs are valuable, but it is important for equity that we get feedback from the entire student body. Donald Belle, William S. Schmidt Environmental Center, Environmental Outreach Educator, specified that he can help reach out to the Green Teams and that he wanted to echo the importance of reaching out to the entire student body. Delegate Mary Lehman (District 21) brought up the idea of creating a Camp Schmidt style experience for the issue of climate change and schools in order to increase the passion of the students.

Councilmember Taveras added to look at other resources, in particular Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Joseph Jakuta, Climate Parents of Prince George's, Lead Volunteer, then went through housekeeping items discussed in the following action items, and Chair Boozer-Strother adjourned the meeting.

Action Items:

- The next meeting is May 19, at 3:30 with a focus on State and County legislation.
- Comment on draft Guiding Principle between meetings and finalize at May 19 Meeting.

- Pamela Boozer-Strother will work with the students and other interested workgroup members to put together the student forum.
- Valerie Erwin will help with ensuring the review of any survey at the student forum.
- We will set up an email list for the workgroup to communicate on.
- We will distribute the google drive for everyone to have access to shared documents.
- We will distribute a draft of the future schedule and will work to finalize it at the May 19 Meeting.
- We will distribute meeting minutes, summaries, and future agendas as well a week before the next meeting.