

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE

Minutes of the 9th Meeting of the 2024 Interim

November 14, 2024

Call to Order and Roll Call

The ninth meeting of the Efficient and Effective School District Governance Task Force was held on November 14, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. in Capitol Annex Room 154.

Representative Kim Banta, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Kim Banta, Co-Chair; Senator Michael J. Nemes, Co-Chair; Senator Gerald A. Neal; Representatives James Tipton, Tina Bojanowski, and Ken Fleming; Britany Abdelahad, Phillip Baker, Angela Masden, George Nichols, Rebecca Nicholas, Jody Wurtenberger, and Allison Ball (by proxy, Savannah Baker).

Guests: Dr. Raymond C. Hart, Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS); A.J. Crabill, Director of Governance, CGCS; Sabrina J. Cummins, Education Accountability Research Analyst, Office of Education Accountability (OEA); Alison M. Stevens, Education Accountability Research Analyst, OEA; and Dr. Deborah Nelson, Research Division Manager, OEA; and Paul Pastorek, Founder, Civic Solutions Group (CSG).

LRC Staff: Joshua Collins, Emily Wiley, and Landen Holder.

Council on Great City Schools

Dr. Raymond C. Hart, Executive Director, CGCS, and A.J. Crabill, Director of Governance, CGCS, presented information on Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) relative to peer districts across the country and the Commonwealth. They provided an overview of school board governance practices and structures most associated with improvement in academic achievement.

In response to Senator Neal, Dr. Hart stated the largest disparity of student academic performance is between white students ineligible for free and reduced-price lunch and African-American students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Dr. Hart testified

that economic conditions, as opposed to ethnic background, has a larger impact on student academic performance.

Responding to Representative Bojanowski, Dr. Hart promised to provide the committee with data comparing JCPS' National Assessment of Educational Progress performance with CGCS school district members. Mr. Crabill said individual school boards decide which performance measures to use when analyzing academic achievement data for the studies completed by CGCS.

Responding to Representative Tipton, Dr. Hart stated administrative longevity, established practices, and a school board focused on student outcomes independent of external factors are some of the best governance practices for school systems. Mr. Crabill added that instructional quality and resource allocation which reflects a community's vision and values, tend to improve student outcomes.

In response to Mr. Wurtenberger, Dr. Hart testified CGCS provides member districts the opportunity to communicate with peer districts to improve and learn.

Responding to Mr. Nichols, Mr. Crabill stated CGCS would provide the committee with the bibliography of resources used when coaching school districts.

In response to Ms. Baker, Mr. Crabill testified CGCS would provide the committee with the school district identified community vision and values for JCPS.

Responding to Ms. Abdelahad, Mr. Crabill stated the effectiveness of a school board depends on its ability to delegate authority to the school district's governance and administrators.

In response to Mr. Baker, Mr. Hart stated CGCS would provide the committee a copy of the completed CGCS report findings for JCPS, which includes a district organizational structure evaluation with recommendations for improvement.

In response to Representative Fleming, Mr. Crabill testified accountability for academic underachievement is frequently not directed at a school board, but rather individual schools.

Office of Education Accountability Reports

OEA Staff Sabrina J. Cummins, Education Accountability Research Analyst, Alison M. Stevens, Education Accountability Research Analyst, and Dr. Deborah Nelson, Research Division Manager presented findings of the School District Governance Models and

Interventions report that included a review of statutes and regulations, data from the National Center for Education Statistics, state intervention with district governance, and media reports. The study was completed by OEA to provide context for local district governance and does not make recommendations.

In response to Ms. Abdelahad, Ms. Stevens said the Large District Local Board of Education Membership list data was compiled by sampling school district's whose student population are within 25 percent of JCPS.

OEA Staff presented the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Kentucky School Districts report that outlines total per-pupil spending of JCPS compared to all Kentucky districts, revenue sources, increased cost factors, and barriers to achievement in lowest-impact schools. Dr. Nelson noted much of the increased local revenue in JCPS originates from higher property assessments and occupational taxes. In the last decade, increases in percentages of Limited English Proficiency and Hispanic students in JCPS outpaced the state.

In response to Representative Bojanowski, Dr. Nelson testified OEA adjusts for performance when studying the most effective practices in school districts.

Civic Solutions Group: Strategies to Support Transformation in Urban School Districts

Paul Pastorek, Founder, CSG, outlined urban school district challenges, a comparison of the state's role vs. the district or board's role, and levers to support high performance in urban school districts. Mr. Pastorek noted 17 high poverty JCPS schools are currently rated academically average or good. He testified that common traits of comparable districts which have shown success include a vision for success, high-stakes accountability, an investment in talent, and actionable school improvement strategies. Mr. Pastorek identified state levers as actions used by states to incentivize high quality teaching and the development of talent pipeline.

In response to Representative Bojanowski, Mr. Pastorek stated, if a model is adopted and funded by state or local resources, academic achievement would improve in all school districts to which it is applied.

Responding to Mr. Wurtenberger, Mr. Pastorek testified that shifting the focus of JCPS resources to schools identified as requiring Comprehensive Support and Improvement would best improve the district as a whole.

Announcements

Chair Banta announced the next meeting of the committee will be at the Annex on Monday, November 18, 2024.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM.