



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

New Haven Board of Education Strategic Planning Minutes

Thursday, May 16, 2019

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Hillhouse Fieldhouse, 480 Sherman Parkway, New Haven, CT 06551

Morning Session

Presenters: Dr. Francis Barnes and Ann Borthwick

Session Objectives:

- Review and revise the draft visions created during Session 1.
- Develop a finished draft of the context and vision for each New Haven Public Schools priority area.

Group Norms

- Respect each other's ideas
- Remain open-minded
- If misspeaks occur, ask for clarification while in the room

Welcome by Dr. Tracey and Dr. Birks

- Dr. Tracey and Dr. Birks welcomed the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and reminded them of the purpose of their work and the importance of their continued participation in the strategic planning process. Dr. Tracey noted that the tables were organized around each of the district's priority areas and requested that participants identify a facilitator, recorder, and timekeeper within each group.
 - It was reiterated that the District's Transition Team work provided context and background about New Haven Public Schools and guided the development of the District Continuous Improvement Plan. It also informed the work of the development of the Continuous Improvement Plans for the schools and departments. Participants were encouraged to embrace a collective mindset around continuous improvement and to capitalize on each other's strengths.
1. The session commenced with the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) presenter, Ann Borthwick, who explained that this session's work would focus on developing a vision for each of New Haven Public Schools Priority Areas. She also noted that the SPC may not get to the High-Quality Teachers and Teaching portion

of the agenda and the research on how people learn during the session as priority is being given to the development of the district's vision and mission.

2. The group norms the SPC agreed upon in previous sessions were reviewed and guided the committee to identify and come to consensus on these additional norms:

- Turn all cell phones and pagers off
- Refrain from sidebar conversations
- Observe the schedule (start times, breaks)
- Participate actively and fully
- Assume good intentions
- Expect and accept non-closure at the end of each session

3. The SPC agreed to commence the remaining sessions at 8:30 a.m. to accommodate the reform meeting scheduled time.

4. The foci of previous sessions with the SPC were reviewed:

- United States and Global Context
 - Defining college and career readiness
 - Comparative data
- Characteristics of school systems in high-performing countries
- Building blocks for a world-class system
- Framework for strategic thinking
- Beginning work on visions for the district's five Priority Areas.
- Key points identified by each of the groups on Day 2 of Session 1:
 - System must be nimble (Priority Area 3)
 - Consistent mindset and collective vision about how New Haven Public Schools does business – systemic (PA 3 and 4)
 - Importance of relationship building (4)
 - Teacher preparation and professional learning (2)
 - Reconsider use of TIME during the day for teachers to plan, consider best practices (2)
 - Centralized curriculum decisions – importance of curriculum decisions (1)
 - Need depth vs breadth (1)
 - Students go out into community – apprenticeships (5)
 - Partnership with Yale (5)
 - Trauma-informed community (5)
 - Respect for teachers/educators
 - Need to have a city-wide effort, including the mayor, BOE, parents

- Do we really want all students to succeed?
 - Participant: “Do the adults in the systems want to set aside their issues for the collective good in order to ensure that all students can succeed?”
5. The SPC was reminded of the discussion from Session 1 where it was noted that our system is perfectly designed to get the results we are getting. The SPC members made the following comments in response to this statement:
- There are values laden in change, and values laden in not changing. We need to understand the reasons and values behind a reason not to change so that there is more understanding regarding the decision to maintain status quo.
 - We have a system in education where there are winners and losers. If you give A’s, you have to give F’s. If you give 5’s, you have to give 1’s. We have a system that is heavily weighted towards having kids who are winners and losers. This will be really tough to unravel, not just in New Haven, but what has gotten ingrained in education over 200 years.
 - NISL presenter, Dr. Francis Barnes, reminded the SPC of the Conceptual Framework for Strategic Thinking and the focus on context. “We have to carefully unpack and deeply understand our context – the subtle incentives built in – in order to consider doing something differently.”
 - “The constant experience of people working for New Haven Public Schools is “change....” For teachers, if I just keep my head down and continue doing my thing down here, I can avoid in many ways dealing with the churn up here. This is both at the heart of the system, and also a reaction to the constant change.”
6. NISL presenters Dr. Barnes and Ann Borthwick, explained the expectations and purpose of a vision to the SPC. They also shared characteristics of vision and mission and the goal of this session, for each priority area:
- “There has to be a strong communication system so that people have a chance to critique, to understand, but then to carry it forward.
 - “There “is a what and a why. Every year, there is a different venue, and the why is that, at the core, nothing has really changed. We are asking you to create a vision that is so crystal clear that it lets you clear away the uncertainty, think deeply about your context, understand the structures and processes that are interfering with student achievement and the establishment of the culture you want here in New Haven.”
 - Session Goal: Finish draft of:
 - CONTEXT and
 - VISION

- Mission versus Vision
 - Mission as purpose, why we exist
 - Vision as an image/picture/description of the desired end state of the planning process
 - Length is not the criteria; it should provide a roadmap as to where you intend to go.
7. Sequence of Activity for SPC Priority groups:
- Context and Vision for each priority area
 - District’s Mission
 - District Vision – connecting the visions for each of the priority areas with the District’s Mission
8. NISL’s Framework for Strategic Thinking was reintroduced to the SPC:
- Context
 - Vision
 - Strategy / Strategies
 - Actions
9. The SPC reviewed New Haven Public Schools’ current vision and the goal of New Haven Public Schools’ Continuous Improvement Plan: “To ensure that all kids learn, achieve, and rise to a bright future” as well as the New Haven Public School’s C.O.R.E.
10. Ann Borthwick reminded the SPC of the importance of context-- to consider their context as they work to develop their vision for their priority area:
- Context is VERY important!
 - Study your context – both internal and external
 - Examine issues from different perspectives
 - Generate new ideas and approaches
 - Break out of approaches / practices that are not providing the level of success that is possible, given the level of resources
11. The SPC worked in groups on their deliberations and drafting of the context and vision for their priority area.

Afternoon Session

12. The afternoon session commenced with the SPC working in groups to deliberate and refine the context and vision for their priority area.

13. Each group shared their context and draft vision statement:

- Talent Management
 - Draft Vision statement:

The vision of New Haven Public Schools Office of Talent Management is to cultivate the life cycle of the educator. We will continually improve through cultivating reflective practices and providing opportunities for staff collaboration, innovation and development.
- Academics
 - Context:
 - High expectations (Do we expect all students to succeed and meet them where they are?)
 - Performance discrepancy by cohort (Our students do not achieve at similar levels across cohorts)
 - High quality instruction that matches the needs of the students (are we certain that we are doing everything we can to provide high quality instruction?)
 - Teacher capacity
 - Professional development
 - Time
 - Resources
 - Time to learn new materials
 - High stake testing
 - Push for curricular changes
 - Lead to enormous pressure to teach to the test
 - Accountability as a system? Vs Autonomy
 - Student transience
 - How does the system push expectations down?
 - Initiative fatigue
 - The system is not set up for support, and so it is difficult to set it up for accountability
 - Not enough resources to do well, so we end up gently lowering the standards across the board.
 - Race and Gender of teachers do not match the race and gender of the students.
 - Statewide problem – too few candidates
 - System wide problem (hiring late)
 - National Problem (racism; discrimination)
 - There are people in the broader community who are interested in education – How do we bring them along or in?

- Can we install a deeper system to include paraprofessionals as teachers eventually?

Vision: Every student in New Haven Public Schools develops the academic, social, and cultural skills necessary to have a broad range of opportunities in further education and success (happiness) fulfillment.

- What are we preparing them for?
 - College
 - Competitiveness in the world
 - Trade certification
- Students have developed a sense of self that is healthy and allows them to succeed. Students are driven by their assets.
 - Flexibility
 - Compassion
 - Well versed in a range of academic disciplines
 - Resilient – willing to take academic risks
 - Intercultural competence
 - Code switching
 - Social adaptability
 - Social/emotional intelligence
 - I want students who are good at many different things, but can also specialize...
 - Technology (in or out)
 - Multi-lingual (in or out)
 - Skills (problem solving and critical thinking, accessing and analyzing information, creativity and innovation, citizenship, responsibility, initiative and self-direction)

14. After much engagement in sharing and discussion, the session was adjourned with Dr. Birks expressing thanks to the SPC members for their hard work and commitment.