



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**New Haven Board of Education Strategic Planning Minutes**

**Monday, April 29, 2019**

**8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

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

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**Morning Session**

**Presenters:** Dr. Francis Barnes and Ann Borthwick

**Session Objectives:**

- Study historical and current data about global education and what is happening in the United States.
- Analyze important factors affecting school education in a rapidly changing world economy.
- Learn about the key characteristics of school systems in the high performing countries.
- Elicit shared characteristics of high performing school systems in the United States and globally and align them with priority areas for New Haven Public Schools.
- Begin strategic planning for New Haven Public Schools.

**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**

- Everyone received a rousing welcome from Superintendent Dr. Carol Birks, with a special welcome extended to the high school students' participants from ESUMS and High School in the Community.

- Members of the committee were encouraged to consult Dr. Tracey with questions or constructive feedback. They were reminded that they can access the reading materials on the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) portal.
- An explanation was presented by Dr. Tracey on how the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was formed: the Reform Committee decided on the categories of individuals to serve on the SPC as well as selecting some of the SPC members. SPC members were also chosen by New Haven Public Schools' Executive Team sub-committee.
- The importance of the role of the SPC was reiterated as the district focuses continuous improvement in five priority areas with the goal to ensure that the system becomes a premier educational system in the nation. The team was reminded that the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) presenters are partners to support the development of the district's strategic plan, and the importance of keeping the focus on learning.

1. The session commenced with the viewing of the video "The Future of Work."

The NISL presenters introduced the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) College and Career Readiness (CCR) research highlighting the criteria for success in the first year of typical community colleges. The SPC discussed the research findings that relate to the level of mathematics and reading that are required and the findings that are relevant to New Haven Public Schools' context. Key considerations are:

- The district should provide high level Tier 1 instruction and set up problem-based teaching and learning structures to build resilience.
- New Haven Public Schools need a formalized program across the district to provide students with opportunities to engage in meaningful/real life application. Develop programs that include internships in high schools and expand with opportunities for students to earn college credit while in high school.
- SPC members identified the need for increase student socialization and student-to student discourse.
- The district should explore in depth restorative practices.
- The district should consider increasing the amount of instructional time allocated to the development of the career skills students will need to succeed post-graduation.
- Instruction should be designed/delivered to promote students' conceptual thinking.
- "Education happens beyond the walls of schools." Learning should take place beyond the classroom.

- Collaborative skills as well as decision-making skills are still needed to be successful in the workforce. New Haven Public Schools need to create partnerships with businesses and non-profit organizations to provide our students opportunities to engage in real-life application.
  - In addition to content knowledge, thought must be given to pedagogical knowledge.
  - The district needs to reexamine its partnership with teacher preparation programs.
2. The committee then examined the United States' data on educational attainment and income distribution and discussed the impact of economic changes on education. Each SPC member read and discussed the articles: "The Great American Growth Machine and How to Fix It", "Is What Once Made US Schools Great Now Holding Them Back?", and "Two Theories of School Improvement – Which Works Better?" Main points from the SPC discussion include:
- A society with this much inequity has some legitimate issues.
  - The SPC is encouraged to think about who are the beneficiaries of low skills jobs. One SPC member reminded other committee members to keep in mind the impact of racism and classism structures that exist in our country and the impact on the workforce.
  - As a district, we need to think about how we prepare students for technical jobs. Consideration and value should be given to "specific" skills-not just low and high skills. "Plumber and electricians are not low skills jobs-they are "specific" skills jobs."
  - Technology has eliminated various jobs. However, it is important to think about what jobs being replaced by technology and question whether or not technology is always beneficial.
  - New Haven Public Schools need to have a social justice thinking frame to allow students to have authentic discourse regarding jobs they deem vital to the workforce Curriculum and instruction need to remain a balanced between the arts and core subjects.
  - The SPC members are encouraged to consider district values during the decision-making process. Concerns were raised about losing sight of social/cultural values. The SPC needs to focus on what students do well and avoid putting emphasis on the deficit model during the strategic planning process.
3. Further, the United States per pupil spending data and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report on grade 12 Reading scores were examined. The data suggests that per pupil spending has increased but student results have remained the same. The committee also looked at per pupil spending for primary and secondary education by country and discovered that the United States has one of the highest per pupil expenditures. Other conclusions and questions raised by the SPC include:

- Is New Haven Public Schools spending money on the right positions? Has the district adopted an instructional staffing model to meet the needs of the 21st century? The district has to be cognizant of the academic/social demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and make decisions based on current needs.
  - If New Haven Public Schools believe education is for every student, then it is imperative that the district accept that education is going to cost more for some students.
  - The SPC should remain mindful of the impact of poverty on learning during the strategic planning process.
  - Allocating more money to education does not always guarantee a better education. The SPC discussed exploring how the district is prioritizing its funds.
  - The SPC members were encouraged to read the paper, *Ten myths of American Exceptionalism*.
4. The next set of data examined was the United States rankings in Reading, Mathematics, and Science on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which is conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Seventy-two Countries participated in the assessments which is administered to a diverse national sample representing all students. In 2015, the United States ranked 23/72 in Reading, 39/72 in Mathematics, and 25/72 in Science.
- High-performing schools changed their instructional structure/model in order to increase student achievement.
  - In high-performing countries, teachers spend more time collaborating with each other which resulted in increased student achievement.

### **Afternoon Session**

5. The afternoon session commenced with the examination of Characteristics of the School Systems in High-Performing Districts. Committee members visited [www.Ncee.org](http://www.Ncee.org) where they researched characteristics of schools in the following high-performing countries: Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan and Shanghai, China. The SPC examined each country's schools through the following lenses: Teacher and Principal Quality, Instructional Systems, System and School Organization, Education for All, School to Work Transition Strategies. The SPC members engaged in a Jigsaw activity to share their research findings with each other.
6. An analysis of information about the international top-performers, specifically examining what they do differently from the United States was conducted by the team. Findings from the analysis were:

- They have centralized, standardized curricula.
- There are strong early childhood elementary programs.
- The amount of hours spent in the classroom teaching is less than in the United States, and the amount of time spent collaborating and engaging in professional development is much greater.
- The schools provide authentic work experiences for students.
- There is greater respect for teachers and the teaching profession; Teacher salaries are high.
- Teachers have more leave time.
- Assessment of curriculum requires more critical thinking .
- There are more family supports– daycare, pre-k and K, financial support, wraparound services
- New teachers have a lesser teaching load than experienced teachers.
- Mentor Teachers have lesser teaching loads.
- Fewer national tests are administered annually.

After much engagement in sharing and discussion the session adjourned with Dr. Birks expressing her thanks to the Strategic Planning Committee members for their time, hard work and commitment.