



Coordinating Council for Children, Youth and Families

Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2016

5:15 p.m. – 7:23 p.m.

344 Broadway

Summary

Summary of Conversation Topics

- Review of the Family Policy Council's "Function and Purpose" and "Powers and Duties" according the ordinance
- Review and discussion of the Family Policy Council's "Criteria for Choosing an Area of Focus" document
- Discussion of the Areas of Focus for the Family Policy Council to address the Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge

Key Agreements

- Agreement that the "Criteria for Choosing an Area of Focus" document should be revised based on recommendations made by members of the Council

Next Steps

The group identified the following next steps (or commitments) during the meeting:

What	Who	By When
Save the proposed meeting schedule for 2015-16 (3 rd Thursday of the month unless otherwise noted): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May 19, 2016	All KC members and affiliates	
Revise and update the " <i>Criteria for Choosing an Area of Focus</i> " document based on recommendations made by members of the Council during the March 17 meeting	Nancy Tauber	May 19, 2016 meeting
Forward Family Policy Council opening to members of the Family Policy Council via email	Nancy Tauber	



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Detailed Notes

Present:

Mayor Denise Simmons, Neal Michaels, Rabeya Akther, Tina Alu, Griffin Andres, Naia Aubourg, Lace Campbell, Marly Ciccolo, Louis DePasquale, Elaine DeRosa, Jan Devereux, Staisha Foster-Jarvis, Mary Gashaw, Dwayne Green, Robert C. Haas, Liz Hill, Claude Jacob, Jack Kiryk, Alanna Mallon, Matt Nelson, Mike Payack, Geeta Pradhan, Monique Reyes, Bridget Rodriguez, Olivia Scott, Ellen Semonoff, Nancy Tauber, Theresa Tirelle, Miles Toussaint

Co-Chairs: Mayor Simmons and Neal Michaels

Executive Director: Nancy Tauber

Content Manager: Mike Payack

Desired Outcomes:

- Shared Understanding of the Family Policy Council’s “Function and Purpose” and “Powers and Duties” according the ordinance
- Review and provide feedback on the Family Policy Council’s “Criteria for Choosing an Area of Focus” document
- Brainstorm possible Areas of Focus for the Family Policy Council to address the Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge

Socialize, Network and Eat

5:15 pm – 5:31 pm

Call to Order:

5:31 pm – 5:41 pm

- Welcome & Introductions (Mayor Simmons)
 - Mayor Simmons welcomed attendees and started a round of introductions
- Adoption of Minutes (February 25, 2016 meeting)

- Tina Alu moved to adopt the minutes for the February 25, 2016 meeting
 - Alanna Mallon seconded motion
- Motion carried - minutes adopted

- Public Comment
 - No public comment
 - Neal Michaels moved to close public comment
 - Liz Hill second motion
 - Motion carried – public comment closed

- Announcements/Updates
 - Next Family Policy Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 19, 5:15-7:15 pm, at 344 Broadway
 - There is a Family Policy Council Community-at-Large opening
 - Opening will be posted next week
 - Nancy Tauber will forward the posting to members of the Council to share with their respective networks
 - Find It Cambridge Update
 - “Find It Finder” position will be a Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) job
 - Mayor Simmons announced that Cambridge will be participating in the Queen Mothers of Ghana tour in October 2016
 - Looking for Cambridge Youth to participate in traditional presentation ceremony
 - Goal of visit is to learn about teen pregnancy, domestic violence, Multi-Service Center
 - Queen Mothers serve alongside the chief, but focus is on women and girls
 - Olivia Scott thanked members of the Council and City staff for giving the Cambridge Youth Council the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. for the National League of Cities Conference

Introduction:

5:41 pm – 5:49 pm

- Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge: How can the Family Policy Council make a difference?
- Mayor Simmons reviewed a summary of previous Family Policy Council and CYC conversations regarding opportunity gaps in Cambridge
 - See Attachment A for detail

Family Policy Council Ordinance Review:

5:49 pm – 5:55 pm

- Review the Family Policy Council's "*Function and Purpose*" and "*Powers and Duties*" according to the ordinance
 - See Attachment B for detail
- How do we work within the context of the ordinance to address the opportunity/achievement gap?

Criteria for Choosing an Area of Focus:

5:55 pm – 6:17 pm

- Nancy reviewed the "*Criteria for Choosing an Area of Focus*" document
 - See Attachment C for detail
- Nancy asked attendees to break into small groups to discuss whether the document should be amended in any way
 - Past areas of focus
 - CET
 - Find It Cambridge project
 - Questions:
 - How has KC reached hard-to-reach families in the past?
 - CET, 200 face-to-face interviews, provider interviews, talk with people who talk with the voiceless (even if it's hard to reach the voiceless)
 - Work to provide more resources to support CET and outreach workers. Door 2 Door in housing developments. Voices of different linguistic communities heard in more City processes. Funding for training program by CET to train City employees and non-profit staff in doing outreach within different groups within communities
- Members of the Council suggested the following revisions to the "*Criteria for Choosing an Area of Focus*" document
 - Regarding items #1 and #8: Can we make sure there are measurable benchmarks and be clear about tangible impacts? Add definitive timeline/checks and balances along the way to make sure we are making progress toward goal
 - It should be a policy initiative because a policy is what makes it a law. Policy holds the City to the standard. Want to create a living record
 - On November 18, 2013, the Council recommended the Family Engagement Policy
 - The Department of Public Health surveys teens at CRLS every year and compare data to state and nation. We can use this data to learn where we need to work. How can DPH do better to push that report out? It's a 50-page PDF on DPH's website. Covers behaviors, mental health, stressors, etc.
 - 8th and 11th clauses should be affirmative for sake of continuity
 - A member suggested changing the order of the clauses. The member will give the suggested revisions directly to Nancy in writing
 - Items #3 and #7 are very similar. Combine them?

- What was the focus area that lead to Find It Cambridge?
 - Family Engagement -> make it easier to access info -> Find It Cambridge
- Seems like three groupings. Should we arrange into these 3 categories?
 1. Identify the issue
 2. Ensure engagement of those who aren't engaged
 3. Do something where we can measure success
- Ask ourselves: *Is it doable? Can you measure it? Will it stand test of time?*
- Combine items #4 and #9?
- Nancy will review these notes and revise/update the document and present it to the Council at next meeting (May 19)

Small Group Discussion about Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge:

6:17 pm – 6:59 pm

- Nancy Tauber announced that the Council would break into small groups to discuss Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge. Two or more Cambridge Youth Council members will lead the discussion and take notes in each group. The idea was that the CYC members acquired a better understanding of what the FPC members currently think about the Education Debt. The discussion was conducted in a mini-fishbowl where CYC members were just listening to FPC members discuss. CYC members asked follow up questions as they felt was needed
- Members of the Cambridge Youth Council asked attendees to consider and discuss the following questions in their small groups:
 1. What is your understanding of the causes and effects of the Educational Debt (aka Achievement Gap)?
 2. What do you believe is the role of the student in their own education?
 - a. How much power do you currently think students have?
 3. What do you think the Family Policy Council's role could be in challenging the Education Debt?
- **What is your understanding of the Opportunity Gap?**
 - Starts young
 - Family situations make a difference
 - Primary sources outside of school (hunger, income, etc.)
 - Stress
 - Lack of cultural, social, etc.... competency in teachers
 - Homeroom teachers can play an important role and act as advisors
 - Not enough support for students who are disadvantaged
 - A lot of judgment from faculty, teachers, parents, which contributes to the problem

- Racial misunderstandings, inferior vs. superior, bias and expectation
- Not everyone has same access to information
- Working
- Language
- Parents need to be knowledgeable about their child's education, and the child must be involved, too
- Unintentional groupings within schools – getting past these biases
- If someone is determined to go to college, they will go. If not, they will stay in the categories
- Parents don't have the knowledge about the different course levels. Especially immigrant families. They don't understand US school system well enough
- When people don't advocate, they most likely don't know about the opportunities
- If parents don't have good relationships with their children, they will not communicate very well about school and the opportunities
- Issues lie deeper in elementary school – where it needs to be addressed – instead of waiting until high school
- Programs at elementary schools are helpful to immigrants that break them out of the categorical boxes
- Teachers should talk to families about how they can advocate for themselves and children (start early)
- If you are categorized as a problem child at a young age, you will be held back
- What can systems do?
- Drivers are outside of academic experience, but we measure academic performance
- Didn't know CP (College Prep) wasn't a top level course
- Self-driven – education system doesn't build that
- Create a safe space in schools to help people experiencing stress
- Support-understand-respond
- Relates to institutional racism, segregated neighborhoods, privilege/opportunity, etc.
- Starts before birth
- There is a fundamental flaw in the education system
- The norms are for white, middle class, English speaking families. It's an uphill battle which is demonstrated in the classroom
- Differences in financial background, families not available for child's needs
- Institutional racism – much less opportunity
- Segregated neighborhoods
- Starts before children are born-gets bigger over time
- Educational system built for moderate-high income households
- Cultural norms built for white, wealthy households

- Effects – Hard for certain people to reach certain levels of achievement
- People tend to think it is one thing – it is much more
- Kids enter school system with different levels of education
- Diverse school system creates tracks
- If schools are teaching different levels of students, students will come out at all different levels
- Teachers' expectations and resources
- Students' expectations and community's expectations
- Become a well-rounded person
- Summer learning loss
- Salary gaps

- **What is the role of students?**

- Students have as much power as they are willing to exert
- Depends on the teacher
- Advocate your voice/be aggressive
- School support pays off, very powerful
- Early childhood education – parents educate/advocate for the child at that point
- If parents don't advocate early on, students won't know how to advocate so they fall behind in that aspect
- Tracks and categories early on will impact the amount of power students believe they have
- Performance has been different at the different schools, and they can be seen
- Schools tell students to strive for Harvard, but also say to strive for Bunker Hill—when it should be either/or for any student. NO DIFFERENCE. All students should receive equal motivation from school staff
- Kids should be encouraged to go anywhere they feel they are ready for, not where they are placed based on teacher opinion
- Students who have immigrated don't have same advantages as the ones who have been here since kindergarten
- High school doesn't have enough empowerment for all students – only for certain students
- School needs to encourage all aspects of curriculum
- Students are left out of the conversation of what is needed to learn
- Students are empowered to be agents of their own education. Students gaining control and power
- Social class plays a huge role in students' priority levels and how some students have more privilege than others
- It's different for different students

- Power – some have a voice (outspoken), but for others, education is not a priority
- Don't know the options
- Don't know the difference between CP (College Prep) and honors
- Need a visual infographic
- Administration take a look at CP (College Prep) and honors classes
- Guidance Counselors are being stretched too thin
- Teachers choosing classes for incoming 9th graders, already tracking them. Need to get family more involved
- Help 8th graders come up with a roadmap
- Some kids did not have any say in their placement
 - For example, "a technical career is for you"

- **What can the Family Policy Council do?**

- Group 1
 - More parent involvement from an early age
 - Understanding Controlled Choice System
 - Understanding the high school system
 - Choosing classes
 - Support from Community Engagement Team
 - Increase dialogue between Family Policy Council and the Superintendent and School Committee
 - Parent Workshops
 - Spreading information and awareness
 - Less emphasis on testing, more learning (experiential)
 - Funding College Counselors
- Group 2
 - Start informing families about college throughout high school
 - FAFSA Parent Night
 - Mandatory professional development for teachers
 - Importance of inclusion
 - Culture and race
 - Expand definition of Guidance Counselors
 - Homeroom teachers and time restructuring
 - Change role and substance and teacher involvement
 - Post high school success
- Group 3
 - Family/student intervention in elementary school to right trajectory of at-risk students
 - Mentorship by high school students during middle school

- Expanding literacy programs (afterschool and summer)
 - Create opportunities to develop student agency and family engagement
 - Cultural proficiency training
 - Synthesize existing efforts moving forward
 - Establishment of support for CP students to promote student engagement and advocacy
 - Develop better support for families to help them understand tracking in relation to their child and their influence on that process
 - Seek to promote and support positive transitions
 - Birth to Preschool
 - Preschool to Kindergarten
 - Elementary to Middle School
 - Middle to High School
 - High School to College and/or Career
- Group 4
 - Self-Advocacy
 - Educating Parents and Students at earlier age (4th or 5th grade)
 - Teachers and Guidance Counselor training
 - Emphasize competency for everyone
 - Support for everyone, not just those who are motivated
 - Creating an understanding that students are allowed to take different paths
 - A way for students to comment and/or evaluate teachers (there are websites)
 - Motivation and support is key
 - Creating flexibility in the curriculum
 - Integrating kids with special needs, IEP, 504, etc. so they don't feel isolated
 - Label the levels (CP, Honors, AP) so that students and parents understand the meaning
 - Reorganize the system
 - Change the relationship between the guidance counselors and students
 - Suggestion – College Counselors
 - Be considerate that guidance counselors have a heavy workload. Challenging to give all kids the right amount of attention
 - Group 5
 - Policy that ensures all this happens
 - 8th grade Posse
 - “Road Map” initiative to plot the road toward college/career success
 - Campaign highlighting current initiatives City already has in place to support student success and increase awareness and access
 - Find out what is already happening

- College Counselors available free to all students
 - Via MYSEP and more
- Look at data city collects and identify who is disengaged and strategize how to reach them
 - Health Survey
 - Support efforts to hire more teachers of color
 - Race awareness and cultural competency training for ALL

Brainstorm possible Areas of Focus:

6:59 pm – 7:19 pm

- Brainstorm possible Areas of Focus for the Family Policy Council to address the Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge
- Sharing one idea from each group
 - Post high school success parent night to educate parents about the college process early in student's high school career
 - Increase dialogue with the new superintendent
 - Accountability of reports on efforts to address achievement gap (not just at high school level...starting at elementary level)
 - Increased efforts to hire teachers of color
 - Increase self-advocacy skills in students from a young age
 - Mentorship program in which high school students mentor 5th graders (especially "at-risk" students). Harder to reach students once they are already in 8th grade or high school

Next Steps:

7:19 pm – 7:23 pm

- At the May 19 meeting, pick Area(s) of Focus to address Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge and begin to work on an action plan

Adjourn:

7:23 pm

- Neal Michaels moved to adjourn the March 17, 2016 meeting of the Family Policy Council
 - Ellen Semonoff seconded motion
- Motion carried – meeting adjourned

Attachment A:

Summary of previous Family Policy Council and CYC conversations regarding Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge

- ❖ Family Policy Council and CYC should work together.
- ❖ Review existing efforts and research data.
- ❖ Develop a campaign and/or community conversations addressing Opportunity Gaps
 - Talk with and inform families and students earlier about the possible pathways in high school and beyond.
 - Make sure families and students know how to advocate for themselves.
 - Create smaller, intimate affinity groups so that families have a safer, more supportive environment to discuss these issues.
- ❖ School related issues:
 - Create opportunities for students to share their stories with teachers, Upper School leadership, families and others in the community.
 - Provide more mentoring and support for middle school students (high school students help 8th graders pick classes, “Posse”-type programs, etc...)
 - CP vs. Honors and AP issues
- ❖ Support College Success Initiative
- ❖ Continue to support the Community Engagement Team.
- ❖ Culture and Race awareness training is needed.
- ❖ Provide translation so everyone is included.

Attachment B:

According to the Coordinating Council for Children Youth and Families ordinance:

Function and Purpose

The Council will direct a comprehensive local response to the needs of children, their families and other caregivers by:

- Promoting services and other activities that are preventive rather than reactive;
- Promoting services and other activities that are coordinated rather than fragmented, and that result in improved accessibility;
- Encouraging innovative responses to needs;
- Generating activities that create opportunities for all children, their families, and other caregivers;
- Supporting families, their choices, and their strengths, recognizing diversity and the many different choices that families make about how to bring up happy and healthy children;
- Promoting services and other activities that are comprehensive, oriented to the needs of children and families seen as whole people.

Powers and Duties

- Recommend children, youth and family policy to the City Manager, the City Council, the School Committee and other appropriate committees;
- Review and make recommendations regarding the City's allocation of resources affecting children, youth and families to the City Manager and other appropriate officials;
- Act as a catalyst in mobilizing and coordinating other efforts within the City aimed at responding to the needs of children, youth and families;
- Act as a clearinghouse for efforts within the City aimed at responding to the needs of children, youth and families;
- Act as an advocate with regard to State and federal policies which impact on the City's children, youth and families;
- Mobilize and coordinate resources available to Family Policy Council Members and organizations they may represent to develop joint projects to respond to the needs of children, youth and families;
- Enlist the cooperation of various racial, religious and ethnic groups, civic and community organizations, labor organizations, fraternal and benevolent organizations, and other groups and organizations to further the intent and purposes of this chapter.

Attachment C:

Criteria for Choosing an Area of Focus to address the Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge

1. Takes something on where we can show progress within a year.
2. Utilizes the strengths and resources of the members and Executive Director of the Family Policy Council and offers clear ways for them to contribute.
3. Enhances the capacity of the Family Policy Council, providers, agencies and networks to continually learn from families and incorporate the voices, the needs and strengths of families with an emphasis on families who historically don't have a voice.
4. Addresses articulated community needs.
5. Builds on existing and already planned initiatives, rather than being duplicative.
6. Aligns with the function and purpose of the Family Policy Council as stated in the ordinance.
7. Enhances the ability of all families (with emphasis on families with fewer opportunities for access, voice, and participation) to access resources and help providers reach families.
8. Benchmarks can be developed to track progress toward desired outcomes and where possible use existing data and information.
9. Recognizes the resources and relationships needed at the onset.
10. Creates opportunities for partnership.
11. Initiative will be visible to the people we are trying to reach.