

DRAFT DRAFT
Education Transition Team Minutes
April 20,2007

Present: Vivian Fisher, Deryl Bailey, Monica Knight, John Knight, Lewis Shropshire, Courtney Tobin, Kelly Girtz, Jim Geiser

Vivian opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their willingness to participate on the Education Transition Team and sharing the expertise of each of the members. She also mentioned that a meeting was planned with the principals of the Chase and Fourth Street schools on Monday and hoped that they would help to find parents and teachers to serve on the Team.

The recommendation that the group is focused on is: **Convert two schools, preferably Fourth Street and Chase Street elementary schools, to new school models (charter, magnet, etc.) and develop them, with shared decision-making by the school district, parents, community leaders, and neighborhoods, by August 2008. Consider additional new model schools as well.**

The next item on the agenda was the discussion of charter and magnet schools as well as district schools. Everyone agreed that the goal was to create a model school. There was not a desire to create a school that was an "island". It was also agreed that whatever models were developed that the community must be a partner in the decision-making process. It was also mentioned that whatever models were pursued, they would target students from diverse backgrounds. It was agreed that as the models were developed all organizational options including charter and magnet would stay on the table. The goal is to choose the organizational model that would best serve the students and the community.

Some factors that have precipitated the desire by the community to look at new models of public education include:

1. There is a desire for new models that could improve the low academic achievement of many of our students in Clarke County.
2. There is a feeling of distrust within the community regarding the school system.
3. There is a lack of trust that the College of Education is providing the high quality training necessary to prepare teachers and school leaders to serve families and students in poverty.

4. The schools cannot solve the problems of poverty by themselves. Other community resources must be coordinated in a cooperative way to serve school communities.

There was some discussion as to why Chase and Fourth Street were chosen. It was mentioned that Fourth Street was chosen because of its continued academic problems. Fourth Street was also chosen because the Boys and Girls Club is planning a new facility nearby and could be an ideal partner in developing a comprehensive family resource center. The family resource center could focus on the non-academic needs of children K-12 and their families. Chase St. was chosen because there had been some parents who were interested in expanding the school to a K-8 model. Chase Street was also chosen because there was the opportunity to develop a neighborhood school that could serve as a model for bringing together a community and developing a school with diverse demographics.

It was mentioned that there was obviously need within other schools, but it was not practical to try to address more than two schools through this current process; hopefully whatever models were developed could be replicated.

There is time to plan. It was mentioned that the earliest that we are probably talking about opening a new school is the 2008-2009 school year. The group wants to make sure whatever model is used that it is both research based and common sense based--and supported by the community.

Some components of a model school could include:

- Start the school at 3 years old – providing the Early Childhood component. (We would need to work with the early learning initiative to develop strategies for funding.)
- Be a laboratory for teacher and school leadership development focused on serving students in poverty. The University leadership for this could come from the College of Education—it could also come from other departments within the University.
- Funding would need to be clearly defined.
- Perhaps develop elementary and middle school models similar to the Performance Center high school model.

Some follow-up and other information that was mentioned included:

1. Meet with the principals of the two schools and the communities. Determine if there is interest and support in developing new model schools. If so, the conversations would begin as to what these new models would look like based upon the needs of the students and families who would attend.
2. If there was not interest from those school communities be open to explore possibilities with other school communities.
3. Get data from the schools that might point to the schools/demographics with the greatest need. (Monica)
4. African American males are a major demographic in need of added support.
5. Possibly start with a school within a school model.
6. It was suggested that perhaps the College of Education could use its students to staff the various after school programs in Clarke County. This could provide some real service learning and preparation to teachers in training.

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday May 4 from 3:30-5:00 at the H.T. Edwards School.