

Facilitation

For creating Committee Recommendations

- 1. Your facilitator has volunteered to help assure that your time is well spent and productive.**
- 2. The facilitator will remain neutral to the agenda and be non-judgmental about discussion**
- 3. Facilitation will help assure that everyone has an opportunity to participate and contribute. To help this process the group is encouraged to honor the “rule of three”, whereby the last speaker waits until two more people have spoken before speaking again.**
- 4. Differences of opinion are to be expected and help create a better product. We are looking for everyone’s ideas-there are no wrong answers. The facilitator’s job is to help participants find common ground.**
- 5. All of us are well served if we leave our ego at the door and bring our passion for breaking the cycle of poverty.**
- 6. The entire group is responsible for enforcing these rules.**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET GUIDELINES

- 1. Each worksheet should contain only one recommendation.**
- 2. The statements on the form may be completed in any order and it is not necessary to complete every bullet.**
- 3. A committee recommendation worksheet can be updated throughout the next three meetings as final committee recommendations are developed.**
- 4. If necessary, work on recommendations is encouraged to continue between large group monthly meetings.**
- 5. Please provide a contact person for each uncompleted committee recommendation so that PPA staff can help provide support and follow-up between meetings.**
- 6. Once a committee believes that it has developed a strong committee recommendation and has provided sufficient detail, it should be turned in to the Committee Chair or e-mailed to schristopher@fanning.uga.edu.**

If you have any questions you can contact Jim Geiser or Delene Porter at 706-542-1108.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET

Fill in as many blanks as possible. Fields with an * are required in case we need to contact you for clarification. Thanks for your interest and input!

Name*: _____

Phone*: _____ E-Mail*: _____

I. List the Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing

- **WRITE THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION** (limit focus to one subject or action item, more than one recommendation may be needed to address a particular learning):**
- **Identify any research, or other kinds of information that was used to craft this recommendation. (add additional sheets as necessary)**
- **Identify additional research or information that could help clarify this committee recommendation. List potential sources if possible.**
- **Indicate people or groups that we need to talk to help clarify this committee recommendation. List any recommended locations.**
- **What kind of action or resources would be necessary to implement the recommendation?**

- **Indicate what forces and influences are likely to occur that will support or oppose implementation.**
Forces that support (please list):

Forces that oppose (please list):

****As information is received and/or clarified, these potential recommendations may change or be discarded.**

Education Committee

Learnings as published in Poverty in Athens: What We Have Learned posted on www.prosperousathens.org

- 1. Quality early learning opportunities are critical to preparing children and families for educational success. There are insufficient resources available to meet all the demands for early learning.**
 - Children who receive high-quality care and learning opportunities during the preschool years tend to be more successful in school and later in life than those who do not.
 - The quality of parental care during the child's early years is the main reason for a child's school success.
 - There is a high correlation between education level and income level.
- 2. Our schools do not do a good job of teaching children living in poverty**
 - Only 28.6% of African American males who enter ninth grade graduate on time four years later.
 - Many teachers, parents and students have low academic expectations for children coming from poverty.
 - Students who are reading below grade level in 3rd and 4th grades are more likely to drop out of school.
 - Students who are retained once are 60% more likely to drop out of school, while students who are retained twice are 90% more likely to drop out of school.
- 3. Parents and mentors are critical to a child's education.**
 - There are mentoring programs in the community but these programs do not have sufficient resources and volunteers to meet the demand.

RECURRING THEMES AND CHALLENGES

**Learnings as published in Poverty in Athens: What We Have Learned
posted on www.prosperousathens.org**

- 1. The notion that there exists a welfare system that “pays people not to work” is a myth. Welfare reform has required that low income families with dependent children must be transitioning to employment in order to receive benefits.**
 - The total number of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families cases in Clarke County has decreased by 40% over the past two years.
- 2. High levels of poverty are a burden to those who live in poverty and work to undermine the economy of the entire community.**
- 3. Our institutions and systems have failed to develop collaborative strategies that adequately address the challenges of poverty.**
 - There is a culture of poverty in Athens that passes from generation to generation.
 - There is little innovation in developing new programs, opportunities and collaborations to break the cycle of poverty.
- 4. A good education is one of the major factors in helping to overcome poverty.**
 - An incomplete education—lack of high school diploma, GED, literacy in English, workforce skills, etc.—is a serious challenge to decreasing poverty in Athens.
 - Persons who drop out of school have few job options in Athens-Clarke County.
- 5. Athens has an unskilled workforce that is a barrier to economic development.**
- 6. There is a lack of effective coordination and collaboration among faith-based organizations, non-profits, schools, universities and government agencies.**
 - There are serious problems getting information to the public about existing assistance programs.
 - There is a lack of specialized support for immigrant populations.
 - There are gaps in services.
- 7. Effective strategies to address racism and class issues are lacking.**
 - In Athens-Clarke County the consequences of poverty fall mostly on African Americans and, increasingly, on our growing Latino population.
 - There is a hesitancy, by all races, to have honest dialogue about the impact of race and class as they relate to poverty.
- 8. There are disincentives built into various systems that make it difficult to break the poverty cycle.**

Education Committee

Unedited Learnings as posted on www.prosperousathens.org

Athens Success Stories Sub-committee

Principal Contact - Fred Smith, JoBeth Allen

Mission: To identify people in Athens who have experienced poverty and have gone on to contribute to the community. To establish a speakers' bureau and media series to share these success stories.

Learnings: (Our learning will be from the stories people tell about what support people and systems contributed to their success.)

1. It is important for students living in poverty to have positive role models and mentors, including career mentors, internships, and apprenticeships.
2. It is important for families living in poverty to have positive role models and mentors.

Family Engagement Sub-committee

Principal Contacts – Ronnie Swoopes, Jim Geiser

Mission Statement: Because family and community engagement is critical to a child's success in school, our mission is to help schools, families, and community organizations develop trusting, effective relationships centered on helping children succeed.

Some Learnings that were discussed with our sub-committee included:
Priority Learnings

1. Our current system is not set up to encourage real family engagement.
2. Maintaining stable relationships is key in maintaining strong family engagement. These relationships can be among teachers/parents/family groups/church community/business community, etc. School stability, access, and collaboration are key factors in maintaining family engagement between families and schools.
3. Funding does not indicate that family engagement is a priority within our community—within our school system, business community, and religious community.
4. Family engagement needs to become a habit early—at birth (or before).
5. We need to develop new paradigms and opportunities for parents and schools to collaborate. We need to take better advantage of the opportunities when families and school staff meet.
 - Parents need to take more responsibility in raising their children.
 - Schools need to understand that there is a culture gap.
 - Schools need to listen to parents.
 - Schools and communities could develop true collaborative interactions.
 - Parents are the children's first teachers.
 - We need to build up the parents.
 - The positive and negative perceptions of parents will be passed on to their children.
 - Parents need to be empowered and have say-so on their terms.
 - There needs to be mentorship programs for parents and encouragement to help build up their children.

- Parents need a different level of mentoring.
- Parents need to be treated with respect.
- We need to be careful not to overwhelm teachers.
- Parents need to have ownership and buy-in.
- We need to treat parents as customers.
- Race, culture, and class play a huge role in this discussion.
- There is a lot of judging on both ends.
- There needs to be social learning.
- Teachers need to make more home visits.
- Services and schooling need to be brought to the neighborhoods where the families live.
- Schools are too big; we need to look at smaller schools.
- We need to develop schools around communities so that parents can become more engaged.
- Family engagement is contingent on positive relationships.
- School transiency breaks down family engagement.
- Junior High and High School are too impersonal. Teachers have 150-180 students.
- Schools are currently not set up to encourage family engagement.
- Family engagement is difficult.
- What percentage of kids are at high risk?
- What is the true dropout rate?
- The presence of consistent, positive male role models is critical.
- The issue of teen parents effects family engagement.
- Child care classes in schools could help teen parents stay engaged with their children, and perhaps help end the cycle.
- Don't just deal with the problem at hand, but look at the next generation.
- Consider mentoring between high school students and elementary students.
- The business community could play a major role in supporting family engagement. They could give parents time off to visit schools; they could hold trainings and workshops; hold focus groups; as well as child care.
- Religious groups could become more involved in supporting family engagement.
- Schools can broaden family engagement by incorporating parent programs like GED at schools.
- Schools should be in the neighborhoods; we do not have neighborhood schools.

Continuing Education Sub-committee

Principal Contact: Roussalind Winston-Howell

Mission Statement for Committee/Subcommittee: To promote and expand educational opportunities for all adults in Athens Clarke County by coordinating existing efforts and initiating new ones.

Learnings of the Group:

1. We do not know the learning needs of the adults in Clarke county. (needs assessment)
2. GED/ESOL should be offered at times and locations that meet the needs of local residents.

3. Athens Tech needs to coordinate with GED/ESL programs to develop transitional support services.
4. Need an understanding of skills needed by local employers.
5. Training and professional development is needed to adequately train adult instructors.
6. Adequate pay for GED/ESL instructors.

Religion Sub-committee

Principal Contact - Kaye Giese, Katherine Peiper

Mission Statement: Collaborating with the faith based community, this committee is working to take action in an effort to end poverty in Athens-Clarke County through spiritual and practical means.

Learnings of the Group:

1. There is a definite separation in the faith based community (doctrine, theology, geography, race, politics)
2. Faith based communities need to take a leadership role in issues in the community. (ex. Poverty, education, crime, AIDS/health issues, financial issues)
3. There are more single parent families attending church- the church should be addressing these types of families specifically.
4. Churches are not aware of their specific congregations (such as the knowledge of individual situations of congregates) Most specifically the education status of “in house” children.
5. Churches aren’t gathering current data about their congregation status (churches don’t know what’s going on in house). Gathering this information can help implement targeted actions.
6. Churches need to collaborate to maximize use of facilities to best benefit the community.
7. The faith based community needs to have a clear plan to address poverty in house and abroad.
8. *****Churches need to be able to know who’s doing what in the community. (ex. Have a resource book of information about all outreach programs, emergency needs shelters, etc.) *****

New/Effective Models Sub-committee

Contact – Pam Swayne

Mission Statement: Identify, research, and support successful programs in our community and in demographically similar communities that support the needs of our diverse learners.

Learnings

1. Although we have successful programs, for example, the Performance Learning Center, we’re still not meeting the needs of all students.
2. Reading is a problem that isn’t being addressed effectively.
3. One recurring issue voiced in our community is the value of Vocational/Technical education as an avenue for our students.
4. A culture of low expectations and a lack of parental involvement negatively affect student achievement.
5. Community mentors increase student achievement.
6. We need to do more to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

Other things we want to keep in mind.

1. Correlation between smaller class size, effective teaching, and student achievement.
2. Is there a correlation between student involvement in extra-curricular activities and graduation rates?
3. A need for programs that teach both hard and *soft* skills.

Youth Sub-committee

Contact - Toni Reed

Mission Statement: Our mission is to identify barriers to school completion as well as opportunities for successful school completion for all Athens-Clarke County children.

Learnings: (Not prioritized)

1. Address the No Child Left Behind law—how it's led to an overemphasis on standardized testing rather than on learning; don't teach to the test. (Return to benchmarks.)
2. Focus on the children and *why* they're not achieving.
3. Emphasize vocational education prior to high school; identify children's interests earlier; explore possible vocations.
4. Children need mentors/caring adults/advocates/leadership/guidance/roll models; all children need at least one significant person in their lives, a consistent figure who knows their interests and potential.
5. Need more dialogue among parents, teachers, civic groups, policy makers, faith community, and others.
6. Children need to come to school ready to learn—pre-K and earlier school experiences; language development and vocabulary, verbal literacy, life experiences; understand the purpose, language, and conventions of school.
7. Dropout problem; raise expectations; students say they are bored; they need hands-on learning experiences, especially those tied to real-world, vocational interests.
8. Schools and churches should eliminate barriers. [Don't have more on this one.]

Early Childhood Sub-committee

Mission Statement: All young children in Clarke County will experience high quality early care and learning that prepares them for success in school and life.

Learnings:

1. The quality of parental care during the child's early years is the major determinant of a child's school success. (NICHD study)
2. Young children learn and develop best when their parents and other caregivers are knowledgeable, skilled and able to relate positively to them and their unique needs
3. Young children who are in families challenged by teen parenthood, domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse, poverty, or parent's history of childhood maltreatment need resources and support to address these challenges.
4. If you can't pay for child care you can't work; at least one company in Clarke County provides child care vouchers for their workers for a significant portion of their child care costs. We don't know about what other companies provide for child care benefits for employees (e.g., UGA, hospitals).

5. There is no sick child care in Clarke County; we don't know what models there are for this. Although there is a reported need for non-traditional care (e.g., drop-in, overnight, weekend), we don't know what the extent of use would be if provided.
6. Children who receive high quality care and learning opportunities during the preschool years tend to be more successful in school and later in life. Programs providing high quality care tend to have well-educated staff and lower child/teacher ratios; this increases their cost (NICHD study).
7. 41% of parents who called Child Care Resource and Referral reported that they could not find child care that met their needs – of those whose needs could not be met, 47% were because of the cost of child care. Four years of child care costs more than four years' tuition at UGA.
8. Child care assistance for people in poverty in Georgia is frozen; there has been no increase in funding for the past 5 years. Presently there is no assistance in Clarke County for families in "near poverty"; children living in near poverty tend to receive the poorest quality out-of-home child care and learning opportunities (NICHD study).
9. Even parents who can afford quality child care cannot always obtain it because many high quality centers and homes have waiting lists. Publicly funded programs for children in poverty also have waiting lists. As of March the waiting list for universal Pre-K was 198 (520 children enrolled), for Even Start 75 (163 children enrolled) and for Early Head Start 154 (80 children enrolled).
10. In Clarke County, 29 % of the children entering pre-K scored below age or average developmental ability.