

**Minutes from May 4 Education Implementation Team Meeting
3:30 p.m. H.T. Edwards Building**

Present: Vivian Fisher, Rick Dunn, Kelly Gertz, Courtney Tobin, Lewis Shropshire, Karen Baynes, John Knight, Monica Knight, Jim Geiser

Vivian opened the meeting by introducing our new members. She welcomed Toni Pickett, the Fourth Street principal, to our meeting. To help set the stage for Ms. Pickett, Vivian shared with the group that she, Steve Jones and Jim Geiser had visited with Ms. Pickett and Dr. Bonnie Jackson, the principal at Chase Street. She indicated that both principals were somewhat upset with PPA for not preparing them for the recommendations. However, as a result of that meeting Ms. Pickett was invited to the Education Transition/Implementation Team meeting and Vivian and Steve invited to attend the Chase Street Leadership Team meeting that was held on May 2.

Ms. Pickett shared with the group some of the programs that she is implementing as part of their school improvement. Some of her thoughts as well as programs/activities at the school include:

- It was mentioned that the problems many of her students face start at (or before) birth. Early childhood education is important.
- She has an education reform facilitator at her school.
- Team building among staff is part of her professional development program.
- The large number of students with disabilities is a challenge.
- Providing adequate and ongoing training for the staff is part of their process. Trained staff is very important. Teachers understand that they are life long learners.
- A Leadership Retreat is part of their professional learning.
- There is a 1:17 teacher student ratio.
- Reader's and Writer's workshops are a big part of their Language Arts curriculum.
- They do a Gap Analysis to determine individual plans to address the needs of individual students.
- Title I funds are a big part of their restructuring money. The school also receives some additional resources as a result of its school improvement status.
- They have developed and currently working with Boys and Girls Club to improve its after school program.

- Ms. Pickett wants the school to be a Community Learning Center.
- She understands the possible value of a charter school model.
- She wants the community to feel welcome to come and visit the school at any time.
- Family engagement and involvement are key components of the school. Ms. Pickett is seeking a stronger involvement with the local and larger community.
- GED and adult basic literacy are important components of a Community Learning Center.
- She retained a large number of first grade students to help catch them up.

After Ms. Pickett finished her presentation the group thanked her for coming. It was mentioned that it sounds like there are wonderful things going on at the school. There was some question as to why the school system waited until the school was in school improvement to act. There was also some concern that the school system would not maintain the resources at the school over the long term.

After Ms. Pickett left, Vivian provided feedback regarding the Chase Street Leadership Team meeting that she and Judge Jones attended the previous Wednesday. Like the principals meeting, there was clearly some frustration and lack of trust towards PPA. However, after allowing the group to vent, acknowledging that PPA did not handle things appropriately, and truly listening to their concerns, Vivian thought that a little trust had been built back with the teachers.

Vivian mentioned that the Transition/Implementation Committee would move forward on two fronts. First, we would work towards the continued relationship building with both Chase and Fourth Street schools as well as with other schools and communities to get support and gain trust. We do not need to limit our conversations to Fourth Street and Chase St.

The Implementation Team will also continue to develop a comprehensive school model that we will bring to the community as the school system at the highest levels may have disengaged from the PPA process. The group anticipates having an initial “new model” plan within 60-90 days.

The group continued to brainstorm components of a model designed to primarily serve the needs of children and families in poverty:

1. It would be a laboratory for the university to train school leaders and teachers to work in high poverty schools.
2. It would focus on providing male teachers and mentors, with a focus on qualified African American and Latino teachers and mentors.
3. Work with UGA education department to provide a high quality after school program.
4. Explore extended school year options.
5. Develop strategies to start at 3 years old.
6. Continue working with the Family Engagement Committee to develop the Resource Center model.

It was mentioned that we would seek one or two teachers for our team. It was also mentioned that the group needed to continue thinking out of the box, while at the same time being aware of the restrictions that may exist. It was mentioned that we would begin setting up some community meetings to get input from students and families about what they see as needed in this new model school. Monica was going to get some data for the next meeting.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for May 11 at 3:30 at the same place . . . the HT Edwards Building.