

Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership

December 6, 2012 / 9:30 – 11:00 AM

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
451 Lexington Parkway North, Rooms B-C-D
St. Paul, MN 55104

MEETING NOTES

Members/Designees Present:

Steven Rosenstone-Chair, Brenda Cassellius, Eric Kaler, Karl Aaro, Jim Bartholomew, Paul Cerkvenik, James Field, Kathleen Foord, Jennifer Godinez, Joellen Gonder-Spacek, David Isham, Robert Jones, Grace Keliher, Robert Meeks, Gene Piccolo, Larry Pogemiller, Peggy Poitra, Jeanne Poppe, Kathy Sweeney, Chuck Wiger

Others Present:

Beth Aune, Karen Cadigan, Maggie Diebel, Meredith Fergus, Jane Giles, Karen Hynick, Angie Johnson, Janice Kwallek, Kevin McHenry, Leslie Mercer, Mary Parker, Mary Orr, Steve Stembridge, Julie Sweitzer, Cliff Wittstruck

1. Welcome and opening remarks

Steven Rosenstone welcomed everyone. He noted that the members left the last meeting without a consensus about the next steps for the P-20 Partnership to address the daunting question of the achievement gap. The original proposal that was brought in for discussion in September focused on the achievement gap within each sector focusing on the transition points both to assess whether achievement gaps exist in that sector, and whether those gaps contribute to a less than effective, less than desirable hand-offs occurring as people move through each of the transitions across the sectors. There was a vigorous discussion on that and several other ideas that surfaced at the September meeting. Those additional ideas were to focus on:

- One transition point – the high school to college transition.
- Redesigning grades 11-14.
- Early childhood as the foundation of all that follows.

In consultation with Eric Kaler and Brenda Cassellius, the chair decided to poll the partnership prior to this meeting today. He and Leslie Mercer made phone calls to 25 voting members and reached all but three people.

The results of the phone poll were:

# OF MEMBERS	FOCUS
9	Focus on the breadth of the sectors represented by the council; focus on the hand-offs and transition points between sectors.
5	Focus on key transition between high school and post-secondary; understand where we are on the achievement gap at high-school how it affects the transition and success at the post-secondary level.
4	Would be very happy with either option A or B.
4	Focus on early childhood given its foundational nature.

Rosenstone noted that most members supported or could agree with the original proposal.

2. Review and approval of September 27 meeting notes

Meeting minutes approved as written.

3. Update on SLEDS (Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System)

Leslie Mercer, chair of the SLEDS governance committee, provided an overview. The goal of SLEDS is to develop a P-20 statewide longitudinal education data system that will be jointly managed by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, the Department of Education, and the Department of Employment and Economic Development. The system will match student data from pre-kindergarten through completion of postsecondary and into the workforce, enabling educators and policymakers to answer a range of program and policy questions that can be used to gauge the effectiveness of programs and design targeted improvement strategies.

Mercer shared examples of the kinds of research that has been conducted using the data elements currently in SLEDS including a draft report that high schools might receive annually describing the post high school education and/or employment of their graduates.

Larry Pogemiller, Director, Office of Higher Education, noted that the initial grant funding for SLEDS will run out at the end of the current biennium (June 2013) with a 6-month no-cost extension as a possibility. The MN Department of Education is the fiscal agent for the grant. To continue the SLEDS work, there has to be a request to the legislature this session for base funding. There has been an agreement in the administration that the Office of Higher Education will submit that request which will include base funding and funds to develop additional data elements. The initial reporting has been shared with some legislators and the governor's office and they are very interested in SLEDS and continued funding.

4. **Launch of Generation Next (Strive)**

University of Minnesota President Eric Kaler provided an update on the Strive initiative, renamed "Generation Next." Generation Next was launched on Thursday, November 29, 2012, with a celebratory activity at the McNamara Center. The highlight of the event was a performance by a group called Breaking Ice that presented through song and dance some of the profound challenges facing young people as they move through the education system. The performance highlighted the causes of the achievement gap – it was very powerful. The Generation Next executive director, Michael Goar is preparing to launch the networks. The Generation Next website is available for news and updates at <http://www.tcgennext.org>.

5. **Early Childhood Education and the Achievement Gap: How Minnesota's Race to the Top Grant is making a difference**

Brenda Cassellius introduced Karen Cadigan, Director of the Office of Early Learning which MDE re-established in 2011. Cadigan helped secure the Race to the Top grant, and she is a "Head Start baby" herself so she knows personally the importance of pre-K and has been a champion for pre-school initiatives in Minnesota.

Karen Cadigan and her colleagues, Mary Orr and Maggie Diebel from the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services, provided an overview of early childhood education and development focusing on the achievement gap which they called, "the opportunity gap."

Early childhood development

Early gaps are persistent. The gap starts as early as three-years old. Kindergarten reading is tightly linked to 5th grade reading. Many kids graduate from high school at a 5th grade level. The inputs (language) that children hear at a very young age predict what their vocabulary will be. Early experiences actually have physical and biochemical impact on brain development. The brain is the only organ in the human body that is not fully developed at birth. The first three years of life are critical for brain development.

Mental health

The Adverse Catalytic Experiences (ACE) study developed by Dr. Vincent Felitti (Kaiser Permanente) and Dr. Robert Anda (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), provides evidence that early experiences not only impact the achievement gap, but also health throughout the life span. Children who suffer abuse (verbal, sexual, or physical), witness abuse or domestic violence, mental illness in household, household member in prison, parents separated or divorced have shown great impacts to their brain development and increased health issues into adulthood.

We have all heard this research before at seminars, meetings, etc. and here we are talking about it again. In the past 45 years, the ways in which we have tried to turn the curve on readiness is to fund one program over another. For example, more funding might be given to early childhood development for a year or two, but it's not

sustained. The Race to the Top grant is part of a more integrated solution. Minnesota was one of nine states awarded this grant.

Race to the Top (RTTT)

The federal RTTT grant, \$45 million, three year grant will enable the state to make great strides in improving access to high quality early childhood education. The plan focuses on four key areas:

- Access to high quality accountable programs
 - Parent Aware
 - Scholarships
 - Title I Incentives
- Promoting early learning and development outcomes
 - Standards
 - Comprehensive assessment system
- A great early childhood workforce
 - Core Competencies
 - Professional development opportunities
- Measuring outcomes and progress
 - Kindergarten Entry Assessment
 - Longitudinal Data System (mini SLEDS)

These initiatives will be supported in many ways involving a range of state holders:

- Leveraged private resources (MELF past investments; PASR and United Way support for PA evaluation and marketing; \$3 million CAP project from United Way; \$1.3 million from IBM)
- Being in, maintaining, building relationships
 - Across state agencies
 - Public/private partnerships
 - With existing local and regional structures and resources
- Using scientific thinking, including evidence-informed best practice and implementation science
- Thinking about both sustainability and immediacy

We would like this to be an ongoing conversation with the P-20 Partnership. We can suggest ways that you can be supportive of early childhood, but what we would really hope is that you start to learn about it and develop a shared understanding and think of things that we would never think of, because we don't sit in your shoes.

Following the presentation, P-20 partners asked several questions: This is a mature system with very collaborative work across state agencies. How did you tackle this? What type of systems have you learned about? You must have learned lessons from this on how you get these pieces to come together.

Cadigan responded that it's really not a mature system, it's relatively new. It started at a grassroots level and now has the support from state leadership. In between those two things, we still have huge gaps that need working out. Our challenge will be to maintain the partnership so it does mature. One of the main things we've learned is that no one person or group knows all of it. We have to continue to show up and work together with people at all levels. Within the Race to the Top grant we've built in time to make adjustments.

6. Next steps?

Steven Rosenstone encouraged members to contact either him, Eric Kaler, Brenda Cassellius, or Leslie Mercer if they have ideas/requests for topic items to be discussed at future meetings.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:50 AM, approximately.