

**RECORD OF BOARD PROCEEDINGS
(MINUTES)**

Fayette County Board of Education Special Meeting
November 12, 2015

The Fayette County Board of Education met at 701 East Main Street, Lexington, KY 6:30 PM on November 12, 2015 with the following members present:

Attendance Taken at 6:35 PM:

Present Board Members:

Ms. Melissa Bacon
Mr. Douglas Barnett
Mrs. Amanda Ferguson
Mr. Daryl Love

Absent Board Members:

Mr. John Price

Administration Present

Marlene Helm, Acting Senior Director of Academic Service
Amanda Dennis, Acting Director of Special Education

PURPOSE OF MEETING

Pursuant to KRS Chapter 61, notice is hereby given that on November 10, 2015, the Vice Chair, acting for Chair, of the Fayette County Board of Education called a special meeting of the Board of Education for Thursday, November 12, 2015 at 6:30 p.m., at 701 East Main Street, Conference Room C, Lexington, KY, as a Listening Session with the Special Education Task Force.

A. CALL TO ORDER

A.1. Roll Call

B. EXTEND WELCOME TO GUESTS

Melissa Bacon extended a welcome to all guests.

C. PURPOSE OF MEETING

Melissa Bacon shared the purpose of the meeting.

D. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Melissa Bacon provided an overview of the Rules of Engagement.

D.1. Board will listen, but will not respond. Please understand that answers will not be possible during this session.

D.2. Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes unless the board agrees to additional time.

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D.3. Speakers are not permitted to make disparaging or critical remarks about individuals or employees of the District.

D.4. Speakers are encouraged to avoid being redundant in their remarks to allow time for all feedback to be received

D.5. Speakers will utilize a microphone and state their name and role.

E. INTRODUCTION OF FACILITATOR

Discussion:

Jeanna Mullins has over 25 years of experience at the national, state, and local levels, having served in various coordination and technical assistance capacities in the field of special education. She has a strong background in group process, strategic planning and building organizational capacity to help leaders build infrastructures to achieve their desired outcomes. Jeanna brings extensive experience as a meeting facilitator, having worked with state education and local agencies, government groups, hospitals, businesses and private groups. She also currently serves as the lead for technical assistance for the national IDEA Data Center and is based at the Human Development Institute, University of Kentucky. In previous roles, she has served as a state education department consultant and an elementary and secondary special education teacher.

F. PROPOSED QUESTION

F.1. Are the current structure and functions of the task force the most effective means to improve outcomes for students with exceptionalities?

Discussion:

Jeanna Mullins welcomed everyone and stated the Board will listen to the committee's perception related to Special Education Advisory Taskforce. The group will focus on the one question: "Are the current structure and function of the task force the most effective means to improve outcomes for students with exceptionalities".

Jeanna Mullins stated she will unpack that question by asking two additional questions. "What works well" followed by "What can be improved, what is not working well with the current structure and functions of the Special Education Taskforce".

What is Working Well

Still a few people that show up for Task Force meetings
Parents have input
Students have input
Diverse representation of community members
Committees are established to give structure and focus
Easy to attend scheduled meetings
Sitting together and communicating tonight-need to come back

What can be Improved/What is Not Working Well

- Hard to be heard; afraid to say anything because it goes across the school system
- Not an equal number of parents and community representatives
- Not clear criteria for selection of Task Force members; interpreted as being non-objective and jaded
- Present format: need cooperation, conflict of relationships: way does not provide safe place for conversation; approach to work-emphasis on data but what makes it work is relationships. Need new format so can discuss without fearing consequences. Need to share stories to improve.

- Communication with students can be improved.
- Turnover in leadership; directors/administrators add position to have to lead it
- Engage general education staff as well as special education staff; both care, but, don't always know how to collaborate
- Paraprofessionals need to be part of the Task Force
- Measurable goals of Task Force are needed
- Outcomes, such as graduation with a diploma. Being able to talk in concrete outcomes
- Need selection process for facilitator and members of Task Force
- Sense of urgency to solve and resolve problems-not just numbers; they are people. Want to take action.
- Identify short-term, medium term and long range goals. Identify a clear purpose to have impact
- Focus on attainable outcomes and goals; Five (5) committees are too many
- Work is done outside committees. Maybe better to do work during committee meetings.
- Special education audit could impact changes of the Task Force. Frustrating. Would rather see TaskForce on hold until after the audit.
- A lot of lectures (though informative) with no discussions
- Lack of support from above
- Large committees: clearly defined roles of all members and put it in writing. Include what to do if members need to be replaced, etc.
- Charge of Task Force is ambiguous and so was how it was translated. Broke into committees. Busy and frustrating. Spinning wheels and not producing anything of substance.
- Membership fell off due to consistent turnover of staff. Stakeholders felt they would not make a difference.
- Lack of clear, concise direction. Reporting cycles did not happen. Considered low hanging fruit, but, still needed leadership and more direction. Subcommittee attendance low-nothing to report out which impacted the numbers in attendance. Some subcommittees did not meet.

Recommendations for Improvement

- Differences between Advisory Council and Task Force; how should it look in the future? What are Task Force and auditors looking for?
- What are we trying to design? Measure success of each outcome.
- What power do we have? What can we change? Mechanism for problem-solving?
- Sense of urgency is felt. What are the next steps?
- Powerful to have products. People who have left the district. Hearing from them regarding what worked and didn't work would be helpful.
- Need to give copy of board policies (i.e., special education requirements) to all Task Force members. Let them know school policies.
- Students not asked anything. Need voices of students and parents on Task Force.
- Identify a staff a place that is worry free to express feelings and thoughts about needed changes/improvements
- Lack of information provided by staff to parents
- Important to consider involving outside experts (i.e., universities) and have to consider their schedules. It might be more complicated than just having committee meetings on Thursdays. Many need to meet more often.
- Commend Board by having a Task Force. Very telling. A lot of energy and insights. Understanding purpose of Task Force would help us better understand our goals and what we need to produce.
- Important for parents to have platform. Research and development models based on parent input, etc. These are all issues we haven't discussed at the Task Force meetings. Clear forum for different

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interactions needed. Lots have shown up and want to participate.

- How can we eliminate achievement gap when funding decreases?
- Hard to get students to come to meetings on a regular basis. Cares, but, can't come every time. Same for parents. May increase participation if we allow that.
- Not hearing from all appropriate groups. Central office as meeting location may not be best. Instead, might be better to meet in neutral locations across the city.
- What are the best practices? Have they been shared? Have the current data been shared with the Task Force?
- Share a list of available special education resources with the Task Force.
- Stakeholders-are they buying in for students with disabilities to prepare them for work, post-secondary education and life comparable to their non-disabled peers
- Impressed with tonight. Need facilitated sessions for general education, special education teachers and staff, etc. to learn about what are the problems
- Clearly defined purposes/functions needed. Be purposeful body in conjunction with the audit, rather than waiting for the audit.
- Is special education department doing any actions on closing the achievement gap we don't know about?
- Conversations, like with the Autism Society, included inviting the Superintendent to address group regarding special education services. Automatically, connection made to funding. There are different kinds of systems (so measuring apples and oranges). Need to change attitudes about concerns. Biases about funding. Participated in equity and site based councils, etc. and always hear about services based on funding, not needs. Need to put funding aside in the conversation. It's about individualized needs. Need to look at it through a different lens.
- Create atmosphere where honest discussions can take place
- Self-study of key staff on issues. Constitution of rebooted Task Force. Consider neutral, third party (i.e., HDI) leadership for direction of Task Force. Messages turn to external expertise.
- Public discussions.
- Regular reports on progress of Task Force
- Define membership, such as how many teachers, school leaders, family, or community members. Process for what you do if members miss meetings. Need transparency.
- Better communication, selection of auditors (who they are, etc.)
- Look at other successful models for Task Forces and take that model into consideration for structure, etc.

Parking Lot

Thought about why the Task Force was created. The initial charge for Fayette County: Has the largest financial resources yet indicators show low average?

Melissa Bacon informed the committee, this information would be given to the consultants who are responsible for the audit. She stated Superintendent Caulk would like to include this information into his entry plan.

G. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion Passed: *Approval to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. passed with a motion by Mr. Daryl Love and a second by Mrs. Amanda Ferguson.*

Ms. Melissa Bacon	Yes
Mr. Douglas Barnett	Yes
Mrs. Amanda Ferguson	Yes
Mr. Daryl Love	Yes
Mr. John Price	Absent

John Price, Chair

Emmanuel Caulk, Superintendent and
Secretary to the Board