District Accountability Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2016

I. Call to order
Dr. Dennis Loerzel called to order the regular meeting of the District Accountability Committee at 6:07 pm on Thursday, October 17 in Suite 112 Conference Room (Educational Services Center #1 Building).

II. Roll call
The following persons were present: Jeanette Carmany, Billie Day, Dr. Dennis Loerzel, Julie Rapone, Dan Wright, Ella Hart,

Board of Education Liaison: Not present

Speaker(s): Dr. Lamont Browne – Executive Director, Office of Autonomous Schools
Mackenzie Stauffer – Charter Schools Coordinator

III. Welcome & Introductions
Dr. Loerzel welcomed and gave an introduction to DAC members and guests

IV. Office of Autonomous Schools and Charters
Dr. Lamont Browne and Ms. Mackenzie Stauffer introduced themselves to the group and spoke to the group regarding their backgrounds and experiences in education. Dr. Browne spoke to the topic of Aurora Public Schools first round of innovation schools approved by the state – Working with Charters. He went on to say, these five schools would do some creative thinking to better impact the kids and ultimately having to think outside the box.

Mackenzie Stauffer voiced that the schools have more autonomy for who they hire. As we grow, we need to look at every aspect – For instance food services, as well as others.

Dr. Browne voiced his experience with turning around schools, facilitating the structures and strategies, and holding schools to their plans. Dr. Browne and Ms. Stauffer went on to answer the following questions:

Autonomous Schools

Q. Are Charter schools being held to the same accountability as the autonomous schools
A. Our schools are reviewed by the district

Q. How many new charter schools
A. Three schools that will start in the fall – We’re essentially having one of them that would like to rescind their application and partner with another applicant

Q. Who are the two charters that want to join together
A. Vega and Laurus Collegiate – We would take a look at what is sustainable and see if it’s a viable option. We want to create a sustainable environment
Q. Since DAC has already reviewed the applications will the two charters that want to join together have to be reviewed again by our committee
A. No – We will pitch it to the superintendent and BOE. This is considered a minor modification

Q. What are you using as successful criteria – Let’s use Aurora Central as an example
A. Three year goals – What do we want to see; using the implementation plan and tracker. We need to see immediate progress, and I will present to the board 2 or 3 times.

Q. In order for Aurora Central to actually improve from an old educational setting – What’s being done to increase the skills that are coming into Aurora Central
A. The zone is geographically designed. I can’t say there is a design for our 7th and 8th grade. It’s a significant challenge – Showing kids that are new to Aurora (reviewing data), and Kids that have been at the school two or three years. We have a partnership with CIS. It will come into effect in January. The importance of talent as well as empathetic teachers (socially and otherwise); Teacher and leader development

Q. What do you see as an immediate need for the schools
A. The biggest need is mental health of students. It requires psychological support – We don’t have three psychologists in every building. A big focus is on leadership development, as well as, the curriculum support (ISSN). Challenges in urban schools are multifaceted

Q. Is Aurora Central on some kind of clock – Who do they report to
A. Dr. Loerzel will print a list for the group. Central reports to the district, but the district reports to the state

Q. Who has come off the clock
A. Please reference PowerPoint Presentation attached to email

Q. What about contract protections
A. All union teacher, every school is on the plan. One of the waivers was a calendar revision. Each school has some different plan

Q. Do charters have to accept students with disabilities (I.E.P. - Individualized Education Program)
A. They do have the autonomy to not provide certain services. It would be better for the charters to be looking at the IEP during the application process. Our approach is give them the reality – You need to know the population of Aurora, this not Denver (having the reality check with them early). We do not coach the applicant on how to write the application, but we want to be proactive

Q. How are charters comparing to other districts - AXL
A. Spread about the middle of the pack – In general

Q. What happens when charters start slipping in regards to the report card
A. We hold them accountability to improve

Q. Speak to the perception that we’re putting resources to charters and not the district – Does the district want charters
A. I can’t speak for Rico or district leadership – I am a district advisor to LT. I believe the best way to serve a community is to have diverse educational programs. Looking at not necessarily how many charters, but what kind of charters. Our focus is to increase effective teaching behaviors – Alternate options are best for families
V. **DAAC discussion, Expectations and Feedback**

A discussion took place regarding increasing the number of participants, schedule of DAC, and having an open dialogue between members of DAC. Jeanette voiced that she would place a posting on “Next door neighbor” to recruit Aurora residents to join DAC. Dr. Loerzel voiced that we will do our best to extend the timeline when it comes time to review charter applications.

VI. **Adjournment** – Dr. Loerzel adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

_______________________               ATTEST______________________
Chairperson                            Secretary