District Accountability Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2016

I. Call to order
Janna Youmans called to order the regular meeting of the District Accountability Committee at 6:13 pm on Thursday, February 18 in the Dr. Ed Lord and Patricia Lord Board Room (Educational Services Center, Peoria Building).

II. Roll call
The following persons were present: Billie Day, Jeanette Carmany, Lisa Escárcega, Ella Hart, Merrie Jones, Valerie Nesbitt, Karen Porter, Janna Youmans, Julie Rapone,

Board of Education Liaison: Cathy Wieldman

Speaker(s):
- Cookie Hansen—Title 1/Grants - Opening introduction.
- Minnie Pescador—Vaughn ES (from an elementary, high poverty, Title 1 perspective)
- Liz Ocasio—Medicaid Services (from a district perspective and services)
- Roy Smith—Aurora Hills MS (from a middle school, non-Title 1 school with high school connections perspective)

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

IV. Family Liaisons – Focusing on home visits
Cookie Hansen introduced the Liaisons and explained that Family Liaisons have been around with our district for a long time; however, the functions of the position have changed over time. She explained that many of the families we encounter have high needs, and that each of our schools is different and unique. Cookie stated that not all schools have Family Liaisons – She went on to say that she will provide a contact list via Julie.

Handout(s):
- Aurora Public Schools Family Liaisons 2015-16 contact list

Minnie Pescador explained to the group that she has been a Family Liaison for 7-years. The position started out addressing attendance issue based on the amount of absences a child had. It led into the need to provide clothing, transportation, child care needs, since many students were missing school due to basic family necessities. Minnie voiced that we help families connect – It may be that a parent helps another with transportation. This also led us into the McKinney-Vento program – Helping families with school stability during times of housing instability. She further explained that she’s upfront with families that she doesn’t always have all the answers.

On occasion we have Teachers, Deans, and Principals who touch base and ask to go along on a home visit. Majority of the time families are welcoming. Minnie voiced that we respect the circumstances in which our families live – We are there to provide resources and support them in providing a helping hand.
Liz Ocasio has been with the district 15-years and helps provide Medicaid Services. She voiced to DAC members that she helps families’ access health Insurance. We do referred based visits. We refer families to school-based clinics (must be under the age of 18 years old) and community health agencies. When going out to meet with families we go in pairs for safety reasons. Some of the services that are provided are for mental health visits (10 Aurora mental health visits), vouchers for clinics, vision, dental. Liz voiced that we focus on the whole family not just the child. She went on to say, some of our community partners are Adams County, Medicaid/CHP Outreach, Aurora Mental Health, The Salvation Army, and Colfax Connection.

Roy Smith has been with the district for 23 years – He was the 7th Liaison hired in the district, and is paid out of TE (Teacher Equivalency) funding. He voiced that services include supplying school supplies, providing bus passes, shelter (hotel accommodations). He voiced that he would like to see citizens of Aurora advocate for a shelter in Aurora. He further voiced that the Liaisons know our families by first name and they know us on a first name basis. Roy stated “We love it because we see success and we care”. Another service provided is through Precious Child – They provide four outfits a year four times a year.

V. Innovation Zone Implementation
Lisa Escárcega provided the DAC members with the ACTION Zone FAQ dated August 21, 2015. She presented the group with the innovation Zone Implementation update. Lisa explained to the group that an innovation school can request waivers, and that they design their own program. The group learned where on the Aurora Public Schools web site to navigate to locate the School Innovation Plans (draft version). Lisa voiced to the group that five schools are participating – Those schools are Central High School, Boston K-8, Aurora West College Preparatory Academy, Crawford Elementary School, and Paris Elementary School. Lisa shared with the group that DAC member Karen Porter sits on the Zone Advisory Counsel. She went on to say that ACTION Zones and Innovation plans were developed as a key component of the turnaround strategy, and that the ACTION Zone Theme is International Leadership – More like the IB (International Baccalaureate) program. She also said that International Studies Schools Network (ISSN) has been contracted for six months to help us develop and transform schools. The grouped learned that plans are almost completed, and that they are due the last day in February, at which time they will go to the board for review.

VI. Questions Family Liaisons – Focusing on home visits
Q. How many Title I schools does the district have
A. 26 schools

Q. Are your Medicaid Techs Adams county people
A. We have a contact person at Adams County

Q. For the schools that don’t have a Liaison what do they do
A. Call Cookie at 303-340-0864 Ext. 28472

Q. If a family is sharing information where do we refer them
A. The school nurse can help

Q. Are you apart of the new staff orientation
A. We most certainly can be

Q. Does Precious Child only provide for Elementary and Middle school students
A. No, they provide for Central High School and preschool students

Q. How would families know how to get in touch with you
A. The school nurse – You too can put the word out to call the Liaisons

Q. How are homeless records kept confidential
A. Only about ten district people have access to homeless records – They are kept confidential

Q. How often do you find it “a duty to report”
A. I would say it’s not a major issue – Minnie said, in my seven years with the district one time. We report to the counselor

Q. What kind of follow-up takes place to make sure that families are followed from Elementary School to Middle School
A. We have good communication – One of our goals is to help them navigate the system. We’re there when we need to help

Questions - Innovation Zone Implementation
Q. What happens regarding the probation law
A. What I would say is that the union reps and teachers have to vote on that - Following good employment law

Q. What about other schools
A. We have 18 schools that are priority improvement or turnaround

Q. How many of the five schools have new administrators
A. Aurora Central – Interim Principal
   Aurora West College Preparatory – 3rd year Principal
   Boston – New Principal
   Paris – 2nd year Principal

VII. Items Pending Committee’s Choice for March Meeting
DAC members voted, and decided to cancel the meeting for March 17

VIII. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

______________________________  ATTEST______________________________
Chairperson                     Secretary