

## ANC Education and Health Work Group Meeting Notes

### ANC Task Force on Racism

August 21, 2020

#### Announcements:

**Jerry:** This week Mary Cheh had her annual beginning-of-school meeting with all of the Ward 3 school principals, and sent an update including:

- Asked to obtain a waiver from the Dept. of Agriculture (who provides the free hot meals to schools), so students can receive a hot meal at any DCPS, not just the school that to which they are assigned, so that they don't have to travel

**Judy:** The Ward 3 Democrat Education Committee is looking into the issue of school re-openings and will have some health experts speaking in September

### Prioritized Clusters of Issues and Recommendations for ANC Task Force Meeting on 08/24,2020:

#### Education:

##### Financial Disparities

**ISSUE:** While DCPS' standard per pupil funding formula for schools across the city is equal, other dimensions of supplemental financial support to neighborhood schools are unequal, exacerbating racial disparities in aggregate school funding and therefore education opportunity.

Chevy Chase DC support to Lafayette Elementary School is an example of this, including:

- HSA fund-raising and volunteer support much higher than other communities (Ex: Takoma Education Campus school raised \$25,000 last year and Lafayette raised \$300,000)
- Access to other locally-generated financial and in-kind support for schools is also much higher
- Family ability to afford "pod learning tutors" during required school online periods is also higher in the Lafayette community
- There are no charter schools syphoning student talent and public resources away from the neighborhood school in the Lafayette school Chevy Chase community, unlike other neighborhoods

#### ACTIONS:

- **School-to-School Initiative:** Learn about and encourage Lafayette community to join the initiative founded by a former Lafayette parent if it still operating.
- **Engage HSA in review of equity approach:** As a Work Group we could attend an HSA meeting and ask what can we do as community allies to review the equity approach, and enrich existing efforts to address disparities while serving Lafayette school needs.
- **City-wide Foundation:** Explore efforts to establish a mechanism to share HSA funds across schools by need. Approach DC Area Community Foundation and local association of grantmakers to learn who addresses unequal financing issue.
- **School-to-School Partnership:** encourage HSA to consider partnering with another DCPS school for joint-fundraising and 50/50 split of proceeds.

- **Advocate for higher funding for DCPS:** Work with advocates to boost DCOS funding to “Lafayette” levels so all children can access rich high quality learning opportunities.

### **Curriculum gap around Racial Justice/Antiracism**

**ISSUE:** Exposure to learning about Racism in American, DC and Chevy Chase neighborhood histories is limited in the DCPS curriculum, and Antiracism is not overtly taught as a core value in schools. Lafayette Elementary School has made efforts to expand on these issues through the work of the HSA funded peace educator and the Chevy Chase Historical Society. This needs to be examined and perhaps enhanced at Lafayette and throughout DCPS.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- **Learn about current Lafayette and DCPS anti-racism curriculum and teaching units and materials**
- **To support more engagement on this, develop and recommend a supplemental reading list of books for teachers** for different levels of DCPS grade levels, such as “Anti-Racist Baby” for pre-k and kindergarten; find comparable readings from Teaching for Change.org and other sources for all grade levels; offer to help raise funding to do this.
- **Meet with school board members** Ward 4 member Frasier O’Leary for Lafayette, and the Ward 3 member Ruth Wattenberg for Deal and Wilson, to coordinate and align with DCPS.

### **Information Gaps** (refer to the Community Education Work Group)

**ISSUE:** How can we raise higher awareness in our community and educate ourselves about the financial disparities in DCPS funding and fundraising to guide our support for Lafayette school as an act of equity? AND How can we promote better understanding by community members of the racial history of segregation in Chevy Chase and DC generally, and what can be done about it?

#### **ACTIONS:**

- **Work with Community Group on a community-wide learning and awareness campaign** about financing inequities in DCPS and racial history as a basis of shared understanding that can sustain interest in antiracism action in our community

### **Community Engagement in School:**

**ISSUE:** How can we engage residents of Chevy Chase DC who are *not* parents or who do not have children in the DCPS, so that they may also be educated and informed about and find ways to join in these efforts in advancing education racial equity?

#### **ACTIONS:**

- **Survey community members** about interest in engaging in the life of Lafayette School and what assets people could bring

- **Engage the HSA and head of school** in discussion of ways local neighbors could support the school to identify what is current practice and what more could be useful

### **Technology Gap:**

**ISSUE:** In the current virtual learning environment, many DCPS students do not have access to broadband and technical devices, which exacerbates and widens the educational disparities between students and their families in different neighborhoods in the city. How does this play out in Chevy Chase DC? What is being done to address this here and across the city? What more can be done in our community and beyond?

### **ACTIONS:**

- **Clarify current digital divide efforts underway in DC and at Lafayette** – what’s underway; how what needs to be done to make these sustainable and included in DCPS budget plans?
- **Survey** – compile a list of questions such as:
  - a. What was the immediate corporate DCPS impulse in the Spring and how did it that go?
  - b. What has been the philanthropic and corporate follow-up in supporting a city-wide effort
  - c. What are the results thus far? Which gaps remain? How do we close those gaps?

### **ISSUE: Health related to Education:**

- COVI-19 has revealed disparate infection rates across the District and COVID vaccine availability may be unequal.
- Mental health challenges of lockdown and absence of school affects families differently in our community and across the city.
  - At Lafayette, how is this experienced differently and what responses are underway through school resources during lockdown?
  - At Deal, school counsellors are limited and advisories in home room seem wholly inadequate to address needs. How is this exacerbated during lockdown?
  - At Wilson, to what degree is funding for police presence and public safety limiting more preventive mental health, counselling and support services?
- Many recent articles reveal that reported incidences of child abuse have decreased, not because they are not occurring as much, but because school and social services contact with children is disrupted, so this is a serious issue that is going under-reported and untreated.
- Access to school breakfast and lunch meals has been prevented by barriers in transportation

### **ACTIONS:**

- **Learn about the current situation in our schools** and engage re ways to expand mental health support to students and families in need especially during lockdown
- **Join advocacy efforts** to increase DCPS budget support for such services