

**Atlanta Early Education Leadership Council**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**May 18, 2018 | 8:30 am - Noon**  
**UNITED WAY | 40 Courtland St NE**

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8:45

**Welcome and Agenda Review**

After a welcome from the chair, Stephanie Blank, our facilitator, Bill Potapchuk, will review the agenda.

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8:55

**Strolling Thunder Update**

Vett Vandiver will provide an update on the Strolling Thunder Event hosted by GEEARS on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>.

Vett shared the video that was created from the event and shared feedback from parents. The video is linked in the meeting materials.

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9:05

**PAACT and our Values**

Stephanie Blank will present the idea of PAACT (Promise that all Atlanta Children Thrive) and our values (which is a revised version of the imperatives that we previously discussed). Bill will facilitate the conversation.

**PAACT – Promising All Atlanta Children Thrive**

**Atlanta Values**

In Atlanta, we are champions for children and believe in their potential and promise.

In Atlanta, we are champions of families and put them first in our decision-making.

In Atlanta, we are all neighbors and commit to working together to ensure all our children are healthy and supported.

In Atlanta, we are all responsible for helping our children THRIVE in order for our city to be successful today and tomorrow.

Comments and questions from council members:

- Kevin Greiner: I like this. It is good to have something that businesses and other stakeholders can commit to. We need to flesh this out to understand the goal and make this meaningful. Stephanie says for businesses this could be everything from parental leave policies to breast pump stations to supporting the scholarships.
- Jason Carter: I like the idea of a pact. It is durable and flexible. There are lots of roles for people to play in this, which is good. On the values, it is really important that we be more aggressive in our need to respect children. This needs to be a culturally shift in the way that we think about children and what we are doing to ensure that they thrive. This is about respecting kids and creating the kind of community where they are healthy and thriving. We should talk about how to treat kids. We should put this in the first statement.

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- Lizzy Smith: I like this. The pact is tangible and people can commit to it. It is good to keep the values high level. We can get the commitments to be more specific.
  - Ed Munster: This is great. You could tinker with this forever but this is really good.
  - Pam Tatum: We should say something about the role that early education plays in creating a more equitable community. This is particularly important in a city with such income inequality.

Stephanie presented the DRAFT commitments and then engaged the council members in a discussion about these commitments:

#### **DRAFT commitments**

- **Families have** the information and **resources** needed to create safe, nurturing and enriching experiences that support children’s early learning and healthy development.
- Children have **access to affordable, high-quality care and education environments**, either in or out of home, that support learning and development.
- Children receive **health services and proper nutrition** that enable them to thrive.
- **Data** across programs and agencies is **shared** and used to inform policies and practices that create opportunity for all children as well as measure and communicate progress to the community.
- **Public and private systems** are interconnected and **aligned** to provide effective support for families, children and programs that serve them
- **Resources** and funding are allocated in a manner to reach the needs of young children and families
- The **professionals** who care for our children are respected, well-trained and appropriately compensated
- There is a prolonged, sustained **commitment from** all sectors of **leadership** in the City of Atlanta who understand and champion the importance of the first eight years of a child’s life.

Comments and questions from council members:

- Jennifer Button Henderson: We seem to be missing teacher pay for early childhood educators in our recommendations.
- Frank Fernandez: The commitments are still aspirational.
- Jason Carter: On the commitments, we need to say WHO is committing to these things. Do we want to call people out or do we want to be more aspirational about what we want to see for children and families?
- Paul Alberto: Maybe we need to break this out in specific commitments being made from the business community, the philanthropic community, the school district, the city, etc.
- Kevin Greiner: This are good principles but they need to be more specific if they are commitments.
- Erin Hames: Maybe we need to rename these as they are more aspirational. We need to develop specific commitments that businesses must make to be part of the PAACT; that parents need to do to be part of the PAACT, etc. These are guiding principles, not commitments.
- Ed Munster: These principles should guide us and help us know if we are getting there.
- Jason Carter: The first 2 and the last commitments are value statements. The remaining ones are more actionable commitments that can be measured.
- Kevin Greiner: Jason is right. Some of these are valuables, some are more actionable. The commitments need to be more specific.

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9:30

### **Presentation on Financing Strategies to Raise New Revenue**

David Sjoquist, an economics faculty member in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University, and Nicholas Warner, a research associate at the Center for State and Local Finance and Fiscal Research Center at Georgia State University provided a brief background on financing strategies to raise revenue. The PowerPoint Presentation is included in the meeting materials.

Comments and questions:

- David Sjoquist: The only things the city can do without going to the General Assembly are raising the millage rate, increasing the occupational tax and issuing debt (no more than 10% of the sales tax base).

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9:50

### **Discussion on Finance**

The presentation was followed by questions and answers and the group was given the opportunity to share reactions. Stephanie facilitated.

- Stephanie: There are 5 potential buckets of funding: City, APS, philanthropy, business, private. Should the city and district be the biggest funding sources? If we are not willing to commit as a group than others will not commit. We have to be all in.
- Lizzy Smith: I am not trying to be negative, but we have to put in context the competition. The arts community has been in place and working for additional funding for over a decade, the mayor championed this and this has not happened. We are not the only people seeking these funds. We need to have realistic expectations. The Whitehead Foundation is committed to this and will support this financially.
- Frank Fernandez: The public sector needs to support the bulk of this and the city is in a better position than the school district.
- Jason Carter: Certain aspects should be funded by the city; certain aspects should be funded by others.
- Stephanie Blank: Should our annual goal be highly realistic or highly aspirational.
- Maggie, Center for State and Local Finance: We need to reframe these buckets if we are talking about raising funds. It is new revenue, the taxpayers are the ones funding it, not the city or the local school district.
- Erin Hames asks a question of David and the GSU team: Could the city offer property tax credits that support early childhood? Yes, theoretically but the General Assembly would have to authorize it and would likely require a local referendum before authorization.
- Blythe Robinson: Are we sure we are spending the funds we have from the state and others in the right way?
- Kevin Greiner: It would be very difficult to raise money from the business community for this citywide effort. Their philanthropy could come in the form of supporting their employees but that would tap their funding. This stuff is expensive and there is only so much that businesses have in the terms of the funding to go for this.
- What about the occupation tax? Kevin Greiner says that this is more palatable because everyone is in the game together. Jason Carter and Erin Hames both said that this is politically tough.
- Lizzy Smith: I think you need to start with what funders are already putting into the system so that you start with some momentum. If you start out saying you need \$25M in new money to funders, this is going to be a very tough argument.

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- Billie Walker: We need to tap into existing structures and appeal to what people want to support. Through doing this, we can get more support for this work. People want to support teachers, police officers, their child's child care center.
  - Blythe: We need a plan to sustain funding over time with something like the fund in Miami-Dade. We need a dedicated fund source.
  - Pam Tatum: We have to have confidence that this is the right work and be confident that we can raise funding for these efforts.
  - Lizzy Smith: We need to think about when existing sales taxes will sunset and if there is an opportunity to re-up them to support these efforts.
  - Paul Alberto: Maybe we need to prioritize the timing of the recommendations.
  - Frank Fernandez: We need to start with the baseline of what is currently being funding and then think about who should be funding the various recommendations. Philanthropy could fund more on the front end and could be scaled back. This could be helpful in building momentum. We need to develop a document with the recommendations, what is currently being funded for these things, who should fund these recommendations going forward and the timing for securing that funding.
  - Jason Carter: We do not have to talk about new revenue. We need to reallocate current funds that are going to less meaningful things. We need to build consensus around the fact that this is important and then we build support for the city and APS making this a priority. There are many things currently being funded that don't do as much good for the city and its people. This is the way to talk about from where the money comes. We need to determine where we rank on spending for young children.

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10:10 **Break**

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10:25 **Reviewing Draft Recommendations**

We distributed the draft recommendations to Council members and gave them an opportunity to provide their feedback, concerns and questions on a worksheet developed for each recommendation. We then had a discussion focusing primarily on those recommendations where there were concerns or questions.

DRAFT Atlanta Early Education Leadership Council  
Recommendations

1. Fund child care affordability gap scholarships for families in Douglas and Carver clusters and public service employees
2. Fund grants to high quality early education programs to expand access to children from low income families
3. Expand learning spaces in libraries and other public gathering spots across the city
4. Build more quality seats using the ATL Access Map and a model like the "Fund for Quality" in Philadelphia
5. Expand Summer Transition Programs and KinderCamps
6. Develop an Early Childhood Education Leadership Institute
7. Create a multi-platform, city-wide messaging campaign

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8. Create a shared services program to build capacity and serve the health and well being needs of children and families
  9. Create formal structures for Early Childhood Education engagement in APS, including adding an ECE representative to the APS Cluster Advisory Teams and including ECE providers on the APS cluster maps.
  10. Develop an outcomes and research agenda to inform policy and practice, build in accountability for the early childhood investments being made and communicate outcomes to stakeholders

Concerns:

- Jason Esteves: I am a big fan of #1 and strongly support it. We need to ensure that we get the biggest bang for our buck out of #1. Most of the others can impact a large number of children and not cost that much. This is one that costs a lot per child.
- Ed Munster: Recommendation #1 – we need to plot the impact of these and the return on the investment in order to prioritize the recommendations.
- Stephanie Blank: We also need to consider the good will factor and our ability to build more support for these momentum.
- Frank Fernandez: Recommendation #1 – We may need to rethink the way this is framed. Should we target multiple recommendations to one cluster to ensure that we are serving children holistically.
- Pam Tatum: Recommendation #1 - Is no more than 10% of the family's income the right number? Maybe so. We do not need to spend more for incentivizing quality rated. The state and philanthropy is spending money here.
- Jason Carter: Recommendation #4 - the idea of using the data to drive investments is good.
- Hanah Goldberg: The access map shows us where there are gap areas (looking at supply, demand and shortage). We can overlay high gaps and high poverty.
- Frank Fernandez: Recommendation #4 - I like the idea of this but we need more information.
- Kevin Greiner: Recommendation #5 - Summer Transition Programs – do we have evidence that this is making a positive impact? Yes, we do for STP, not as much evidence to support the KinderCamps.
- Frank Fernandez: Recommendation #7 – Is the juice worth the squeeze here? The cost is high? Who will own it? What bang will we get for this buck? How do we quantify the impact? As we prioritize recommendations,
- Maggie (GSU): This could be helpful if very targeted toward the investments we are trying to secure.
- Jason Carter: Recommendation #8: Who will own this? Who is giving out the funds? Build on existing capacity. Use this to find efficiencies and build capacity around the city to serve the holistic needs of children and families.
- Frank Fernandez: Recommendation #8 - Will small providers be willing to take part in this? Blythe responds and says that they have been willing to take part. Pam Tatum responds to say that they are working with family childcare providers to do similar work.
- Frank Fernandez: I am not opposed to research. It makes sense to research these things and then provide data to this group. Will this allow us to go to the programmatic or child

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level to evaluate the success of this work? Frank now strongly supports this recommendation.

- What is missing? Blythe Robinson: There is something missing on raising the level of quality for existing providers, on getting those that are not Quality Rated to become QR. You will not increase access if you do not increase quality. What are some of the pieces that should be part of this recommendation? What supports are needed to enter into a Quality Rated system? What is the capacity to be doing that while you are running a child care center? Are there other recommendations included that we can use to incentivize this? Ed Munster says that we need to understand that this will be viewed as a threat by some small providers whose livelihood is based on the profit from the center. Lizzy says that they have made an investment to support centers that are not in the system. We need to consult with DECAL about this. Pam Tatum states that by 2020, all centers must be quality rated in order to receive CAPS funding.
- Stephanie Blank: For recommendation #7, we want to include a citywide road show to talk about the PAACT in individual neighborhoods, to get input and feedback from families, to make certain there is public awareness about the programs and services available.
- Ed Munster: These 10 recommendations are overwhelming. Do we have the capacity to implement these? We need to prioritize these recommendations.
- Frank Fernandez: We need to prioritize these.
- Blythe: We need to prioritize and phase in a way that builds momentum.
- Stephanie: I think this seems more manageable when we put these recommendations into buckets. We need a recommendation specifically related to stakeholders across the city being part of the PAACT, especially businesses.
- Kevin Greiner concurs with Stephanie's point.
- Ed Munster: I am treating this like a fundraising campaign. We have to make the case. What is the so what? Who will be attracted to this so what more than anything else. Figure out which groups will support the recommendations. This looks like a fundraising campaign.
- Pam Tatum: the first two recommendations are focused on expanding access. If we group in buckets, we can weave in the sectors.
- Jason Carter: We have to prioritize these by impact and by time. We need to build the case on the front end and the back end. What is the so what? Where are we today? Use the data to show this and to build the case along the way. Who is in charge? Who is responsible? We will be held accountable for this? There is a group of people who want to solve these problems. The school district will be responsible for some of this. That will be a public commitment and they will be held accountable by the voters, etc. How will we know who to go to when the things we want to happen do not happen?
- Stephanie: We will create a flow chart for how all of this gets done and who is responsible? Then we will match these things to the goals.

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11:25

#### **How will We Measure Success?**

Erin will kick off a discussion on the selection of outcomes we may use to measure success over time.

This was moved to the June meeting.

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11:50

**Next Steps and Closing Comments**

For the June meeting, Bill will bring in polling software.

Frank: We need be careful not to back the public officials in a corner. We need to do this earlier rather than later. You need to do this prior to making final recommendations.

Lizzy Smith: We need to make sure that APS is involved in the prioritization.

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Noon

**Adjourn**