

Atlanta Early Education Leadership Council
Work Session #6
Meeting Summary
June 12, 2018 | 8:30 am – Noon

8:30 **Coffee and Mingling**

8:45 **Welcome, Agenda Review**

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

Last meeting of the first phase of our work. We want to set the stage for the summer's work. When we will finalize recommendations and write the report that will be rolled out in the fall. We will discuss the recommendations again, discuss implementation and the PAACT commitments.

Over the last month, many of the council members have provided feedback to the GEEARS team. We have read through all comments. We have had numerous follow-up meetings and phone calls to dig deeper and get further feedback. Our goal is that the recommendations in front of you reflect that feedback.

9:15 **Finalizing our Recommendations**

We will review and discuss recommendations that have been modified based upon your guidance from the last meeting. Bill P. will facilitate.

These are the recommendations that were presented to the Council:

1. Use a proven investment model to create a PAACT Fund for Quality for the following purposes: a) expanding the number of quality seats available to low income families, b) supporting the professional development and credentialing of early childhood educators, c) expanding quality through helping centers become quality rated and helping them move up the continuum in the quality rated system to achieve 2 or 3 stars, d) working with ECE providers and APS to pilot a unified enrollment system for ECE programs, and e) making capital investments to increase the capacity of existing quality rated providers to serve more children
2. Fund child care affordability gap scholarships for families in the Douglass and Washington clusters and public service employees (also embedded in recommendation #1)
3. Fund grants to quality rated early education programs to expand access to children from low income families (also embedded in recommendation #1)

-
4. Expand learning spaces in libraries and other public gathering spots across the city
 5. Expand Summer Transition Programs and KinderCamps
 6. Develop an Early Childhood Education Leadership Institute
 7. Create a multi-platform, city-wide messaging campaign
 8. Build greater capacity to serve the health and well being needs of children and families across the city
 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

Comments and Questions:

- Jason: Who will own the PAACT Fund for Quality? We will get to that in the implementation discuss later in this meeting.
- Liz: We need to be clear about what
- Meria: Instead of naming Washington and Douglass, should we instead just list the criteria we are using to identify the target clusters? We could do this but wanted to present the clusters that the data is leading us to focus on for the purpose of discussion with the council.)
- Cluster Maps for the Douglass and Washington clusters are shown to the council members. These maps are included in the meeting materials. We looked at a number of factors to determine the priority clusters – supply and demand in the childcare space, quality rated capacity, percentage of families in the cluster with children under the age of 5 living in poverty, total # of children under age 5 in the cluster, percentage of households in the cluster without a vehicle and the average CCPRI for the elementary schools in the cluster.
- Blythe: We need to be very clear in the recommendations and the report that this work will take time. For instance, for the scholarships, we would ultimately like families to use those scholarships at 2 and 3 start quality rated programs, but we do not have enough programs rated at that level at this time. We will begin with quality rated programs.
- Meria: I am comfortable with Douglass and Washington, but there is a close third in the Carver cluster where there is also great need. The work in this cluster is getting stronger with the Purpose Built partnership, but the partnerships overall are not as strong here as they are in the

Washington cluster. The current elementary performance is lower in the Carver clusters than the Washington cluster.

- Mindy: I am thrilled with these recommendations. These are true game changers.
- Bill B.: Who will disagree with these recommendations? There are certain individuals who will wish that our focus was on different areas, but will there be specific pushback on these recommendations? We do not anticipate push back, but the issue will be whether people are willing to financially support this work.
- Frank: We need to prioritize the recommendations and determine an implementation timeline. Stephanie: We plan to do this over the summer. Mindy: Much of this work must be done in concert. There will be stages of the work. We cannot wait until we accomplish a certain number of the recommendations before beginning others.

10:00 **Discussing PAACT Commitments**

A promise means commitments. We will discuss possible commitments to PAACT (Promise that all Atlanta Children Thrive) for major stakeholders and sectors.

Here are the draft commitments as presented to the Council:

Promising All Atlanta Children Thrive (PAACT) Commitments

1. Atlanta Public Schools
 - a. The Atlanta School Board and APS Superintendent will champion the PAACT
 - b. APS will designate a seat for an ECE representative on each Cluster Advisory Team
 - c. APS will include child care providers on the APS cluster map
 - d. APS will commit to pay parity for Pre-K teachers and paraprofessionals in APS elementary schools
 - e. APS will include an ECE plan in elementary school principal training and principal performance goal setting
 - f. APS will financially support and host school transition efforts in the city
 - g. APS will explore partnerships with early learning centers to utilize appropriate, unused or underutilized facilities
 - h. APS will commit to supporting cohorts of elementary principals in attending the ECE Leadership Institute
 - i. APS will commit to providing professional development to P-3 teachers to enable them to prepare each child's reading brain (i.e. language, critical thinking, executive function, resilience, empathy)

-
- j. APS will assess the childcare needs of its workforce and will partner with PAACT to develop a plan to address those needs
 - k. APS will provide space for breastfeeding mothers

Comments and questions:

- Jason: Was the order intentional? This may matter and we might want to consider reordering.
- Meria: Add in that the district is continuing their commitment to pay parity. On all of them, we need to call out what the financial support looks like. This is a mix of championing the PAACT and then doing specific things. There is nothing about the list that APS would not want to do.
- Stephanie: We want a specific commitment that is meaningful.
- Meria: Providing a space for breastfeeding seems limiting for nursing mothers. They should not necessarily need to go to a separate space to breastfeed. Mothers should be welcome in schools, etc. to care for their children. There is better wording for this.
- Meria's overall comments: There is a huge implementation component that requires the School Board to act. We should recognize its not just my decision.
- Jason: The Board is committed to early childhood.
- Mindy: The commitments are not the be all and end all of implementation. They represent the initial commitment but are intended to have enough teeth to make that commitment meaningful. We are trying to balance that with the PAACT commitments. Maybe some of these are second stage commitments?
- Meria: Is there a way to tease these out so that there is less specificity in the initial commitments.
- Erin: The balance we are trying to strike is making the commitments specific enough that they are meaningful. It is easy to say that you are for kids and want to see them thrive. The rubber meets the road when individual stakeholders will need to take action or financially commit.
- Dr. Warnock: Are there 4 or 5 things that are game changers for kids in our city? If we agree to those things philosophically, would it get what we want in the commitments?
- Liz: We need to commit to putting in place the adequate policies and the budget to support the PAACT recommendations.

2. City of Atlanta

- a. The Mayor and City Council will champion the PAACT
- b. The city will implement a Family Impact Assessment for all policy decisions
- c. The city will assess the childcare needs of its workforce, including the feasibility of offering on-site, high quality, subsidized child care for employees

-
- d. The city will mirror the state law giving employees educational leave (10 hours/year)
 - e. The city will provide gap scholarships for essential service employees and their families (or contribute to the PAACT Fund for Quality)
 - f. The city will provide an online hub that links children and families to services
 - g. The city will establish a parental advisory group to advise the appropriate city leaders, such as the Chief Education Officer, Equity Officer, etc.
 - h. The city will provide space for breastfeeding mothers

Comments and questions:

- Feedback from City Council President Felicia Moore: Championing something is a policy decision that the council needs to make. This would start with a policy resolution and then work to get them supported. The Family Impact Assessment – City Council would need to work with the mayor on this. For offering childcare, the mayor would need to charge the city HR department to work on this. Giving city of Atlanta employees educational leave is a policy decision that would need to go through the council; this seems doable, but the cost would need to be taken into account. The city providing gap scholarships or contributing to the fund is possible. The online hub is definitely doable; the council could approve this and the mayor and team would need to execute on it. The parental advisory group – this seems to be a group that should work with the Chief Education Officer when that person is hired. We should be clear that mothers are welcome to breastfeed in City Hall.
 - Jason: The city cannot spend money on education. There is legal work that needs to be done to determine how the city can contribute to this. For the Family Impact Assessment – we don't want this to be a bureaucratic box that has to be checked. We do want to make sure that the city government in all of its aspects reviews decisions through the lens of making the city child and family friendly and a place where families thrive. We should probably expand the parental advisory group to be broader in order to include educators, ECE stakeholders, etc. Maybe create a childhood advisory group with various stakeholders. How can the city provide ECE to its employees in a way that is best for the city, in a way that ensures it will have the broadest impact? Is it better for the city to provide on-site care to or to provide scholarships that support neighborhood ECE providers?
 - Cecily Garrett: Consider a tiered approach and start with essential services employees. The city is considering this as a way to retain critical employees.
 - Felicia: We need to educate city council members to help them understand the importance of high quality ECE and to get them excited about this. Would the scholarships have to be used in the city? There are many city employees who do not live in the city.
3. Business
 - a. Business leaders will champion the PAACT and will talk about the PAACT being a key workforce retention, recruitment and development issue

-
- b. Business leaders will financially contribute to the PAACT Fund for Quality to expand quality early childhood education for all children in the city
 - c. Businesses will provide gap scholarships as part of their compensation package for eligible low-wage employees' children to attend high quality child care programs to ensure that those employees are not paying more than 10% of the family income for child care
 - d. Businesses will provide flexibility for employees to be involved in their children's education, potentially 10 hours of educational leave for employees per year
 - e. Businesses will provide paid family leave after births or adoptions
 - f. Businesses will explore partnerships with high quality child care providers to offer on-site child care or partnerships with other small businesses to offer collaborative child care.
 - g. Businesses will commit to having their Human Resource Offices provide information to employees about the importance of high quality early education for their children and the availability of resources
 - h. Businesses will provide space for employees who are breastfeeding mothers

Comments and questions:

- We need to make certain we have the support of Larry Gellerstadt and other key Atlanta business leaders before these recommendations are rolled out publicly. We need to make sure we pre-sale this to key leaders. APS, the city and philanthropy are all at the table, but the business community is not represented in the same way.

4. Philanthropy

- a. Philanthropic leaders will champion the PAACT
- b. Philanthropies will sustain or increase current ECE investments in the city
- c. Philanthropies will invest ECE resources in a collaborative manner with other funders, if and when appropriate
- d. Philanthropies will require ECE grantees to commit to the PAACT and share data with key ECE partners in the city
- e. Philanthropies will incentivize ECE providers to work collaboratively as part of the shared services model
- f. Philanthropies will share the latest research information and ECE best practices to trustees

5. Private citizens

- a. Atlanta citizens will champion the PAACT
- b. Atlanta citizens will financially contribute to the PAACT
- c. Atlanta citizens will contact elected officials regarding PAACT and the importance of high quality early education for all children in Atlanta
- d. Atlanta citizens will complete Cox Campus Brain Builder modules
- e. Atlanta citizens will share their stories with PAACT, participate in the online surveys, etc.
- f. Atlanta citizens will commit to acts of service for young children (reading, volunteering, mentoring, etc.)

6. Childcare providers

- a. Childcare providers in the city of Atlanta will champion the PAACT
- b. Childcare providers will commit to participating in the state's Quality Rated program
- c. Childcare providers will commit to collaborate with other entities serving young children
- d. Childcare providers will commit to collaborate with the elementary schools that will receive the children they are serving
- e. Childcare providers will commit to providing professional development to ECE teachers to enable them to prepare each child's reading brain birth to 5 (i.e. language, critical thinking, executive function, resilience, empathy).
- f. Childcare providers will recognize the preeminence of parents and partner with them
- g. Childcare providers will commit to participate in available opportunities to expand the delivery of services to meet the health and well being needs of their children and families

Comments and questions:

- Bill B.: There is nothing in the commitments about thought leaders. There is nothing about faith leaders. There nothing about a communications strategy.
- Dr. Warnock: Many of those of us in the faith community are part of other community organizations.
- We did not go into a detailed conversation about the PAACT commitments for business, philanthropy, private citizens and childcare providers as a number of council members were concerned about the level of specificity in the commitments. We took a break and then engaged in a conversation about overarching commitments.

10:15 **Break**

10:30 **Discussing PAACT Commitments (continued)**

After a review of the PAACT commitment, Bill P. gave the council members time to work in small groups to discuss these questions: What are the small number of overarching commitments that everyone should make to PAACT? That have real impact? How do we ensure that individual and organizations are making real commitments, not faux commitments?

Discussion:

- Meria: Commitment to funding, policy, education of stakeholders and collaboration (this is no one person's task, we must work together in order for PAACT to be successful). Then, take the detailed commitments to the groups (such as business leaders) to try to sustain their commitment. Some people may

be dropped over time. We need to be clear about what we are solving for with each of the 10 recommendations.

- Lizzy: That is a great summary. We need to spend more time on the recommendations.
- Comer: When I look at the promise we are making, we seem to be making a promise to ourselves as opposed to a promise to our children.
- Stephanie and Yasmin: Our #1 commitment is that every child has access to high quality early education. We must be champions of this effort. We need to be at a place where the city and businesses agree to look at decisions through the lens of positively impacting Atlanta's children.
- Liz: This needs an overarching commitment "this is about making Atlanta different and better. We are making this promise to our kids because the brain science tells us that it is in our interest- employers will be happier, outcomes better, etc." People can't be guilt tripped into doing this. They have to be passionate because it is so overwhelmingly obvious.
- Yasmin: We need the foresight to say that you are not building it in a day but 20 years from now you will look back and say that this is what made Atlanta the greatest city in the country.
- Bill B.: As we meet, we become stronger believers. We have to speak in the language of the people we are talking to- get to their self interest. Speak to the faith community in the language of faith, business community in business language, etc.
- Blythe: Think about the messaging and who owns this work. Don't make assumptions about the provider community and where they are and where they think they need to be. Need to take racial equity issues and others into account.
- Michelle: We need to not take the commitment of providers for granted. We aren't being asked to do anything more than we should already be doing. If that were already the case, why are our 2 and 3 star numbers so low.
- Pam: Groups to add- nonprofits who work with children and families and also healthcare community.
- Liz: NGO's need to be required to work together.

11:00

Discussing Implementation

Moving our recommendations forward will require commitment and capacity. We will discuss GEEARS as a possible home for this work.

Comments and questions:

- Amy: These recommendations are very complex. Funding will have to be devoting to strong implementation. We want to supplement existing funding from the state and federal governments. We need to develop an implementation team.
- Frank: Who will own this? Some entity will be focused on working with the city, district and various stakeholders. My assumption has been that GEEARS would

play this role. We need to have someone who will take that ball forward and run with it in order to ensure that this is not simply a nice report that sits on the shelf.

- Jason: Everything that we do has to have credibility in the communities. Racial equity is critical. The messenger will matter.
- Mindy: GEEARS is willing and very prepared to be the implementation partner. In the implementation, there are entities that have already developed expertise in these areas. We do need to create an implementation team. GEEARS would plan to contract with and work with those who already have expertise in these areas and who are already doing this work. GEEARS can drive the vision, strategy, policy and fundraising.
- Frank: It would be helpful from an implementation perspective to have a governance structure that includes those who can influence policy and those who can fundraise.
- Mindy: GEEARS cannot do this alone with 2-3 new staff people. It will take the commitment of everyone in this room and a strong implementation team consisting of a governing board and staff members.
- Liz: In the quiet conversations with the business community and foundations regarding funding, I would want to know who they have confidence in. It would be good to know what form of representation or governance would give them confidence in investing? Are there loaned executives that could help? Are there auditors, evaluators that they trust?
- Bill B.: Things that get counted, get done. We must determine if this is the best role for GEEARS. Is it GEEARS' role to measure progress and to ensure that these recommendations are actualized? Mindy: Yes.
- Yasmin: Are there models for this in other cities? Are there models for this in the non-profit world? Mindy: We have studied similar efforts in Detroit, Hampton Roads and other cities.
- Mindy: We heard loud and clear that the group did not want to start a new entity for implementation.

11:45

Reflections and Closing Comments

Participants will be asked to share reflections as we bring this phase of the Council to a close.

Bill P. facilitates a discussion with the council members around the following questions: What brief advice might you offer to ensure success moving forward? Do you have any lingering questions or concerns that you think need to be addressed in the final report?

Discussion:

- Mindy: The report will report out how we came to these decisions, the recommendations, the next steps. The report is the next step document – not the final report. Our work will just be beginning; we hope the report will launch important work on behalf of children.
- Stephanie: It is really to me that this really mean something. That if you are a part of the PAACT, it counts for something. That it is not just words. You are truly

living out a commitment for kids in the way that you conduct your work, your business, what you are responsible for. That may be get staged out, may be done in steps, but this is something that I would envision that the city of Atlanta or business would be able to say that they are a PAACT business, that our city is committed to the PAACT. It should mean something for children and families.

- Meria: This is not going to be successful if the mayor is not personally very involved in this and committed to this effort. We need to make a commitment to go and see the mayor and to catch the mayor up on everything that we've done. We need to understand what are sticking points for her, what she is excited about championing. One comment: we state that the PAACT Fund for Quality is a proven mechanism.
- Felicia: I would emphasize Meria's first point about getting the mayor's support. That is a first step to getting the city council's support. We should also coordinate with Fulton County elected officials.
- Milton: There is something special about Atlanta. There have to be leaders at the top of big initiatives. There has to be somebody at the front leading everyone else. People expect those of us around this table to do this work. We need a champion for whom this is not their business but who can bring everyone else along. That is how Atlanta works. History tells us this is required to make this successful.
- Bill B.: I am not an education expert but am a thought leader and an influencer. It would be helpful to have talking points that are clear that can be shared by thought leaders and influencers across the city. We all need to walk out at the end of this work with common talking points.
- Lizzy: I completely agree with Milton. We need to identify a community champion. We need to do this.
- Liz: Very supportive of the recommendations.
- Blythe: I want to emphasize the importance of racial equity. The messengers are critical.
- Jennifer: The implementation is key.
- Comer: We want children in Atlanta to have the ability to make their own decisions. A choice-filled life speaks to racial equity. Historically, those who have not had choices have been black children.
- Mindy: The recommendations are most important. What we heard from the data, from experts. Families in Atlanta don't have the choice-filled life because they can't afford it or they can't get there or there isn't strong leadership at their child's elementary school. The recommendations are going to give families quality choices. These recommendations will move the needle. We are going to make the city of Atlanta the best place to be a child and to raise a child. We will hold one another accountable for the actions needed to make that a reality. This is pretty groundbreaking and exciting for me. These recommendations are strong enough to get everyone at the table.
- Stephanie: I know we got hung up in the commitments today, but part of the thought process in that was making clear that all people have a role in the success

of the PAACT. We don't want people to have wiggle room out of doing the actions that are in the best interest of our children.

- Yasmin: You have to meet people where they are. Nothing moves people more than making people feel like they are part of something meaningful. There has been a first statement of success. The lingering questions are how committed are key people and how much of runaway will we have to implement this.
- Paul: We don't want to be a disappointment to people that we have disappointed so many times. If we give out gap scholarships once, we have not done anything. We must think about sustainability from the beginning.
- Jovita: I have enjoyed being part of this work and seeing a group of people come together to develop solution. WSB is willing to support this work and the communication efforts that will be needed.
- Michelle: You are all flying at 30K feet and I am in the trenches running a center. We must motivate the provider community and bring them on in order for these efforts to be successful.
- Amy: Providers are at all different levels and we must meet them where they are. We have the high fliers at the table. If we don't get the providers across the city engaged, this effort will not be successful.
- Frank: Two bad clichés to share as advice. 1) Don't let the perfect be the enemy of good. 2) Victories have many fathers and mothers to feed an orphan – we must share the credit. There will be some sausage making required for this to be successful.
- Stephanie: Thank you to each of you for your commitment to this work, especially to the providers who have done double duty on the council and the working group. I am all for being practical and reasonable and all those good things, but I want to leave you with a thought from Geoffrey Canada. All families of economic means expect their children to go to college and yet many criticized him for expecting this same thing for the children he was serving in the Harlem Children's Zone. He did it anyway and succeeded. Let's shoot for the moon and do what no other city has been able to do.

Noon **Adjourn**

Council Attendees:

1. Jason Carter
2. Bill Bolling
3. Ed Munster
4. Lizzy Smith
5. Liz Blake
6. Blythe Robinson
7. Jennifer Button Henderson
8. Comer Yates

9. Mindy Binderman
10. Stephanie Blank
11. Jason Esteves
12. Dr. Meria Carstarphen
13. Frank Fernandez
14. Paul Alberto
15. Michelle Hill
16. Rev. Raphael Warnock
17. Amy M. Jacobs
18. Felicia Moore
19. Jovita Moore
20. Milton Little
21. Dr. Yasmin Tyler Hill
22. Bill Potapchuk, Facilitator