

City of Hyattsville Education Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 26th, 2022
6:30 PM – 8 :00 PM
Virtual Meeting: (NEW LINK??)

Roll Call: Attending committee members?

Excused Absence: Melinda Baldwin

Present:

Mai Abdul Rahman
Nicholas Misukanis
Cynthia Totten
Maira Delao
Deshundria Fortson
Soni Woodley

Additional Participants:

Sean Porter
Jackeline Lizama
Mirieth Valenciano
Prachi Mehta

Quorum?
Achieved

Approval of September 26th, 2022 Agenda?

NM: Motion to approve the agenda
Unanimous approval

Approval of June 27th, 2022 meetings minutes?
Minutes approved. Shared with Jackeline Lizama.

Agenda

1. Introductions: Merieth Velanciano
2. Bus Delay Concerns?
 - a. Impact on young students?
 - b. Special school student populations?
 - c. Hyattsville Middle School students?
 - d. Letter to board members, Pamela, Council and school officials?

MV: Buses have been missing stops and not running on time. Parents have had to call and figure out where their children are. Is there any planning?

CT: My son and I have experienced similar things. I have talked with the assistant principal and there is not a lot that they can do. The biggest problem is that there is a bus driver shortage. For the first two weeks of this year, they had no driver. Contacting Pamela Boozer-Strother on the school board was what produced results. Voice concerns to the higher ups. The problem is this shortage and it may not get better soon.

MAR: There is a bus driver in this case, they are doing their job poorly.

MV: Is there something that can be done during the summer?

MAR: There are some bus driver shortages and that would explain some of the problems. Is there someone we can talk to in order to guarantee that they know the route?

CT: Call the school and see if there is someone who oversees the routes and training? They should be consulted on this particular issue.

MAR: Could we consider writing a letter or consulting the school board to write a letter to the schools in order to encourage them to reconsider their logistical and training practices

CT: It certainly wouldn't hurt!

MAR: I would have to imagine that there are people who are looking for jobs. Even if we can get this to work on a parttime level?

MD: Would this be something that we could market at job fairs? Like city job fairs for school bus drivers?

MV: Could we contact other cities to see what they are doing well and what we could potentially learn and implement?

DF: I know that the public school systems had job fairs and offered signing bonuses. If this is a huge issue with Hyattsville, we could try and attend the school board meetings and directly appeal with similar approaches. Could we contact PG county directly?

CT: I also want to clarify that when I say complain, I mean to express our voices and address the problem rather than simply discussing it.

MAR: Is there a way that we can create a cohesive strategy incorporating these ideas. This problem will continue but we need a plan of action. Are there other parents we could ask to aid us in these efforts as well as provide their stories to corroborate these issues?

MV: Absolutely, I think there would be plenty of parents who would be happy to help.

3. Outreach to Hyattsville School principals (Elementary and Secondary)? Homeless Liaison?

JL: I have connected with many of the principals and it sounds like the best day would be Nov 3. 11:30-1:30 for a potential day to connect and discuss larger issues.

MAR: Please keep us posted and please let us know when to meet to organize the agenda.

4. Update on Beltsville homeless youth shelter

MAR: The decision was made to not close the Beltsville Homeless Shelter. Jackie is in the process of getting a better idea on the numbers of homeless people and figuring out next steps to aid people.

5. School guard shortages and security concerns?

MAR: There was an email from the Hyattsville PTA president. There are shortages within the school guard numbers. Could the city open up its website to call for school guard volunteers?

JL: Possibly, we would need to discuss this with officials about what can and cannot be advertised.

6. Review of new Education Enrichment Grants application and selection process?

JL: Last year we let the application out in November but we hadn't determined if that was because of COVID or not and if we wanted to change it up.

CT: Could we share the document again to review it and discuss it more?

MAR: Jackie will send it to myself and Cynthia, we can discuss it over email and finalize the application for our next meeting in October. It is nice for the teachers to already have their projects in hand but my vote would be to have this information ready and to send the applications out in November of this year but then next year, we move to have it all ready for October. One of the particular concerns that I have is that we have 1 school that submits large amounts of applications and they get the majority of the money. Also, another thing we want to consider is whether \$500 will be enough. Lastly, if we can get stuff out earlier, maybe we would get more applicants?

CT: If we raise it, that would potentially mean fewer applicants or applications.

MAR: With 7 schools in Hyattsville, what if we did \$750 and we could use this to encourage more applications?

JL: That could be messy depending on how many schools apply.

MAR: This could be difficult. If we increase the amount, the applicants don't have to change up their applications. Could we streamline the application process? So what we will do for now is edit the application and then we can work with editing the amounts. I suggest we increase the award limit to \$750. If that is not okay, we keep it at \$500. We could then offer an explanation to send more applications if they are capped at \$500.

7. Overview and lessons learned from Back to School supplies event?

- i. When council members' appropriate their discretionary funds to benefit students when and who should notify EAC?
- ii. And the proper procedures and time limits we should consider re-allocating these funds?

JL: We need to be intentional about these things as the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1- June 30)

MAR: I was on the planning committee and that went well. My big suggestion would be to start the event sooner. Other than that, we also want to work on notifying residents where they can drop off their supplies for people. The city relies a lot on the drive to get this organized. Instead of donations, is there a way that we could have people directly purchasing from the source? Rather than having them purchase from Costco, that would work?

8. Should we reach out again to city administrator and council to give us an update on how the special needs of Hyattsville middle school parents are being met by ARPA funds or city bus?

MAR: Is there a way that we can follow up from our last meeting? We had a lot of topics we covered.

JL: Did she state that the city would provide transportation to the school?

MAR: She mentioned that there is a Hyattsville bus that could be provided if there is an emergency in this instance. She would be happy to make the buses available to the parents. Uber would be too costly.

JL: Unfortunately, we are already a bus down so that may actually be more limited than we had thought.

9. School safety concerns?

- i. Outcome of EAC's February 2022 Conflict Resolution proposal?

MAR: In our last meeting, we discussed police preparedness for school shootings.

JL: We had discussed a time to have the Hyattsville Police to come speak with us about their response.

MD: Is there a protocol or response we could learn more about?

CT: I think we would also want to ask the parents to come and speak with us about their gun safety protocol.

SW: I would like to know their plan on the outside. We have protocol for inside the building but could they speak more to specifically about what happens outside the school building in the event of a shooter?

10. Public comment?

Prachi Mehta: I am looking to adopt a child and trying to understand why the public school systems seem to suffer lower ratings.

CT: It starts with engagement. It would also depend on where these reviews are coming from.

MD: I am curious how the ratings are measured. It also doesn't necessarily reflect the true performance of the school. I would recommend getting involved directly. Meeting in person, looking into the PTO, and what is the student-teacher ratio in the school.