

City of Hyattsville Education Advisory Committee
March 4, 2021, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Virtual Public Meeting on Zoom
Open to the Public
Recording of the meeting can be viewed [here](#)

Attending: Mai Abdul Rahman, co-chair; Michelle Thornton, co-chair; Melinda Baldwin, vice chair; Candida Garcia; Jennifer Kubit; T. Carter Ross; Cynthia Totten; Saarah Adbul-Rauf (staff);

Brayan Perez (staff); Bart Lawrence (council liaison); and Dan Peabody (council liaison).

Regrets: Jan Edwards

Guests: Daysi Herrera (parent engagement, Hyattsville Middle School); Dr. Negasi McCurdie (teacher, Hyattsville Middle School); Dr. Carlene Murray (principal, Northwestern High School); Alyse Thompson (parent engagement, University Park Elementary School)

I. Committee Business.

Co-Chair Thornton called the meeting to order at 6:35. The minutes for the December 2020 and January 2021 meetings were approved on a voice vote. It was agreed that the meeting recording would suffice to capture the specifics of the Principals' Meeting portion of the evening's meeting.

II. Principals' Meeting

The committee welcomed the representatives from Hyattsville Middle School, Northwestern High School, and University Park Elementary School to the meeting and thanked them for their willingness to share with the committee and the city information about their schools' current and future needs.

Dr. Murray and Dr. McCurdie provided an overview of the challenges the schools face in the return to in-person learning and hybrid instruction. Among the challenges mentioned were the need for enough technical resources, including computers, for students both in the classroom and at home; extension cords and surge protectors; headsets; personal protective equipment; bottled water (school water fountains are being shut off as a covid safety measure); air purifiers; sanitation supplies; and other school supplies. Ms. Thompson also noted that food security and rental assistance are also a concern for some UPES families.

Another concern mentioned was the need for counselling for students and staff. Both groups have lost family, friends, and colleagues during the pandemic and the schools want to make sure they are supported. Dr. Murray noted that Northwestern works with La Clinica del Pueblo as well as PCCPS counsellors, but a need for more support is likely.

Dr. Murray said that it would be helpful if the city and committee could help spread the word that the school system is working to ensure a safe environment for staff and those students who return to part-time in-person learning. Dr. McCurdie noted that HMS is looking at things like holding some classes outside to help with social distancing and air quality.

One suggestion from the schools regarded traffic flow during arrival and dismissal. There will be a limited number of children on each bus, which will mean more traffic each day, making the

need for efficient traffic flow possible. It was suggested that community volunteers (who must be fingerprinted by PGCPs) could help with directing students and perhaps Hyattsville City Police could help with directing traffic at least for the first few weeks until people get used to the new traffic patterns.

Another possible community source for help would be 3D printing face shields or similar PPE. Dr. Murray noted that she also would like to engage students in such activities, using the school's 3D printer, so that it could be an educational activity as well as a protective benefit.

III. Committee Reaction

After the discussion with the school representatives, the committee discussed possible actions.

To aid with communicating about school reopening plans, there was discussion of using city communication channels, which staff and council members felt raised some legal concerns. As an alternative Carter Ross suggested the committee suggest to *The Life & Times* that the paper interview area schools about their plans and offer to facilitate an introduction if needed.

It was noted that the council was willing to consider using the \$7,190.81 remaining from the 2020 Educational Enrichment Grant program to support the direct purchase of supplies or equipment for schools. The committee would need to make a proposal that can be acted on quickly. Brayan Perez suggested targeting the April 5 meeting, which would allow for funds or supplies to be delivered around April 12.

The committee agreed to hold a special meeting on March 25 at 6:30 pm to discuss and finalize a proposal.

In addition, a community school supply drive based on some of the requested items could be held to provide additional support. Suggested items (from Dr. McCurdie) include: water, food boxes, air purifiers, alcohol wipes, headphones, charging stations, surge protectors, staff incentives to support social-emotional contentment, additional PPE, such as protective smocks and face shields.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15