

SACET Feedback on HS Action Plan

On May 25, SACET members met and shared their impressions and questions about the April 26th HS Action Plan. The discussion included individual responses to the plan, as well as issues specific to enrollment and transfer. Emphasis was placed on areas of the plan that needed additional attention to ensure successful implementation. Summary comments from their session are grouped by topic, but not ranked in order of importance. The committee did not seek consensus on each point, as time was limited and several members were unable to attend the meeting.

Implications of enrollment disparity between schools in 8 CCHS model

- 8 school model does not have any school at 1350 "floor" after 4yrs (complete transition of boundary changes). SACET believes that a uniform and adequately-sized student population in each CCHS is an essential factor in providing equity across the District and will necessitate the closing or consolidation of existing campuses to achieve.
- Sets district up for same cycle of "fleeing" that currently exists. Even if transfers limited, students can opt out of PPS or choose alternative options.
- The attraction of CCHS was the depth and breadth they could offer. The current "small" size model offers little more than a "core".

Benson relocated at Jefferson, Jefferson closed as CCHS

- The rationale for the Jefferson/Benson merger idea was not clear.
- Benson building currently modified for classes offered (shop bays, electricity needs, etc). Cost to re-tool Jefferson.
- Potential loss of meaningful use of dance studio facilities at Jefferson.
- Why should decision to keep Benson a 4year program be linked to moving it to Jefferson site?
- If Jefferson closed, may find students again applying to attend Benson not because of desire/fit but rather for geographic reasons.

Benson as 2-year Half-time Program

- How would this be funded? Transfer patterns show it is unlikely to have same # of students from each CCHS campus, so will funding match actual attending students?
- How cost effective is it to bus students mid-day?
- How will this affect in-class minutes for students who have to travel to Benson?

How will this impact scheduling at CCHS - will it make it more difficult to schedule the students who remain at the CCHS?

- Scheduling, hiring, forecasting matters will be highly complex.
- Program may be inaccessible to students on IEPS, ELL, Academic Priority, or other students needing additional supports in their day
- Transportation costs will be added with the new Benson arrangement. But costs will be smaller if a common block schedule exists across the district.
- Could consider semesters at Benson to ease the logistical complexities.
- Since there are fresh/soph pre-requisites for Benson's program, will this limit the electives CCHS can select as more is required in the "core" program.
- How would students thrive in a traditional CCHS in their first 2 years when they are students who seek "hands-on" environment?
- When would students be accepted to Benson in lottery? If wait till Jr year and not accepted, the student will likely not be able to select another option.
- How would you backfill seats at Benson if students changed their minds?
- Split time will likely dis-incent further students living at a distance from Benson.
- Students will have decreased contact time with mentors as they will be split in two buildings.
- As a reminder, the SACET focus school report emphasized the benefit of freshmen/sophomore academies and career training beginning in middle schools. These are helpful means to prepare students from choosing CTE classes at Benson for 11 & 12 grade.
- Families will have difficulty connecting with two schools.
- Increased complexity for students and families. Likely would favor students with high-functioning and engaged parents.
- Split campuses will make it difficult for students to participate in sports, clubs, activities.
- Teachers across campuses would not have an opportunity to collaborate on strategies to support shared students.

Various topics

- How will we offer the program if state funding continues to decline?
- Regarding systemic changes, particularly at Jefferson, there is a lot of work to do within the community, and it won't be done by 2011.
- Regarding the concern that communities haven't spoken out in favor of the changes (especially the Jefferson community), the District hasn't asked feeder schools to be involved. There are parent organizations in all those schools that could be asked to give feedback.
- Still don't know the purpose of focus schools in the system. The Marshall location is not accessible district-wide.
- The SES balance between schools could be improved through additional boundary changes. The danger is that we are opening the door to new schools falling in to NCLB sanctions.
- Strong support for the academic priority zones, but concerned that the district won't have the support it needs to implement mutual consent hiring and other important elements
- What about consolidating schools? Having 2 schools share a common boundary with courses on both campuses—perhaps an arts/humanities focus on one campus and a science/technology focus on the other. With a common schedule and transportation, students could travel to the classes that best suited their needs.
- District will need community-based staff to help pull off all the changes. These changes won't happen from the top down.
- Support completely shuttering at least one school to increase enrollment at other schools and save money
- K-12 feeder patterns are unique to immersion—an opportunity that is not offered to students in any other focus program
- SACET has maintained from the outset that redesign must be for the greater good, regardless of the inconvenience and sacrifice involved for some. Widening gaps in equity and opportunity must be reversed. Thus, a primary PPS redesign goal has been and continues to be the "leveling of the playing field" for students in every part of the city.
- No matter what certain groups are saying, I believe PPS has proceeded with careful consideration and with students best interests at heart.