

Literacy Chair/Committee Chair Meeting
Thursday, June 22 3:00 PM
Kids Hope Alliance Board Room

Members Present: WC Gentry and Dr. Connie Hall.

Subject Matter Experts Present: Debbie Verges (former Project Director for the Jacksonville Journey during Mayor Peyton's and Mayor Curry's Administrations); Dr. Saralyn Glass (CEO of the Kids Hope Alliance and an expert in birth to 18).

Liaisons Present:

Chairman WC Gentry called the meeting to order at 3:11pm. He discussed working with the school district regarding teaching and training providers around Literacy Pedi-Coaching for K3 through VPK, and after school as a package.

Areas of focus:

- How to teach students
- How to create incentives for teachers
- Afterschool

Chairman Gentry suggested working with the teachers' union to help identify master teaching coaches and the number of sessions available. Sessions would be available for any teacher wanting to participate at an offsite location. Sessions should also be made available for Charter Schools, after-school training, and incentives. This would be included in the budget.

Dr. Hall asked Leon Baxton to discuss the after-school training programs for connecting tutoring and reading in classrooms, possibly via community engagement.

Leon Baxton explained he vaguely remembered. However, the University of Florida Literacy Institute is doing training for after school AmeriCorps tutors to ensure they are aligned with teachers. Currently, all K through 2nd grade teachers is being trained. It's ongoing and refresher training is provided. Training is also provided to 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders.

Dr. Hall stated developing a generalization and connecting the dots will be helpful. WC believes VPK through after school must be covered.

Chairman Gentry received a call from Parvez Ahmed (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director – New Administration). He wants to know what is being done about literacy in the immigration community. According to census, the Hispanic community is the fastest growing in the community. The Chair stated dual language needs to be included in the literacy campaign regarding opportunities for children and adults.

Dr. Hall came across data that supports tutoring and after school help with reading providing opportunities for bilingual and other languages. The research accommodates the student and materials (going from English to Spanish) and different subgroup of

languages. Data needs to be updated and assessments in various areas to determined where resources are, as well as look at the map to find overlays such as:

- Location of schools
- Data with reading proficiency
- Crime
- Immigration and Culture
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Eventually staff will be needed to develop data sets to target and tell the story.

Debbie Verges explained the COJ has a GIS mapping system that can map and overlay intersections discussed. Request must be very specific.

Dr. Hall asked if there is a missing piece as to why we don't see more success. Leon Baxton replied that over the years, they have worked closely with principals. He's excited that the current curriculum that they are trained on across the board has been very helpful. In the past, they relied upon the Principals to have a hand in providing information regarding needs. The good news is that the community-based program has a required hour of academics each day for literacy, Monday through Thursday, which is consistent for all programs. Also, all summer camps have an academic component funded through KHA.

Chairman Gentry stated having the literacy initiative; training wrap around; Pre-k through after school; and immigration (English learning). He asked, "what else in our literacy group did we focus on?"

Dr. Hall replied discussing inventory which is something Rachel is working on. Once inventory is received, there will be opportunities for improvement, adjustment, and expansion.

Leon Baxton added that the Read Jax Initiative has the literacy component and parental involvement. Principals were asked what their greatest needs were. The number one concern for principals was literacy and family engagement. Case management is also a component of the Read Jax Pilot in 8 schools.

Chairman Gentry asked Leon if he is familiar with the DCPS parent academy. Leon replied he has done a lot of work with Betty Burney regarding their parenting piece. Her organization will provide the Read Jax parenting initiative for CIS in the Pilot

Dr. Hall inquired was the intent of the parent academy to develop and train parents to train other parents.

Leon Baxton responded it was a combination of the above.

Chairman Gentry explained it is a great way to communicate. He mentioned Tracy Pierce (Assistant Superintendent of Communications) is a great connection for KHA to help communicate and for all providers to get information out.

Key partners also need to be identified:

- Libraries
- Lutheran Family Services
- United Way

Areas of focus:

- City-Wide Initiative (stand-alone)
- Training Pre-K; K-3; After School
- Immigration Community English Learning
- Inventory of all Entities and Reading Environment
- Identification of Key Partners
- Parental Involvement and Literacy
- Family Literacy

Debie Verges mentioned KHA does have a group that meets regularly with everyone involved in family programming. This is an ongoing committee.

Dr. Hall mentioned there should be a separate category for businesses. Leon Baxton stated there are business partners who have been in place since COVID.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:42pm.