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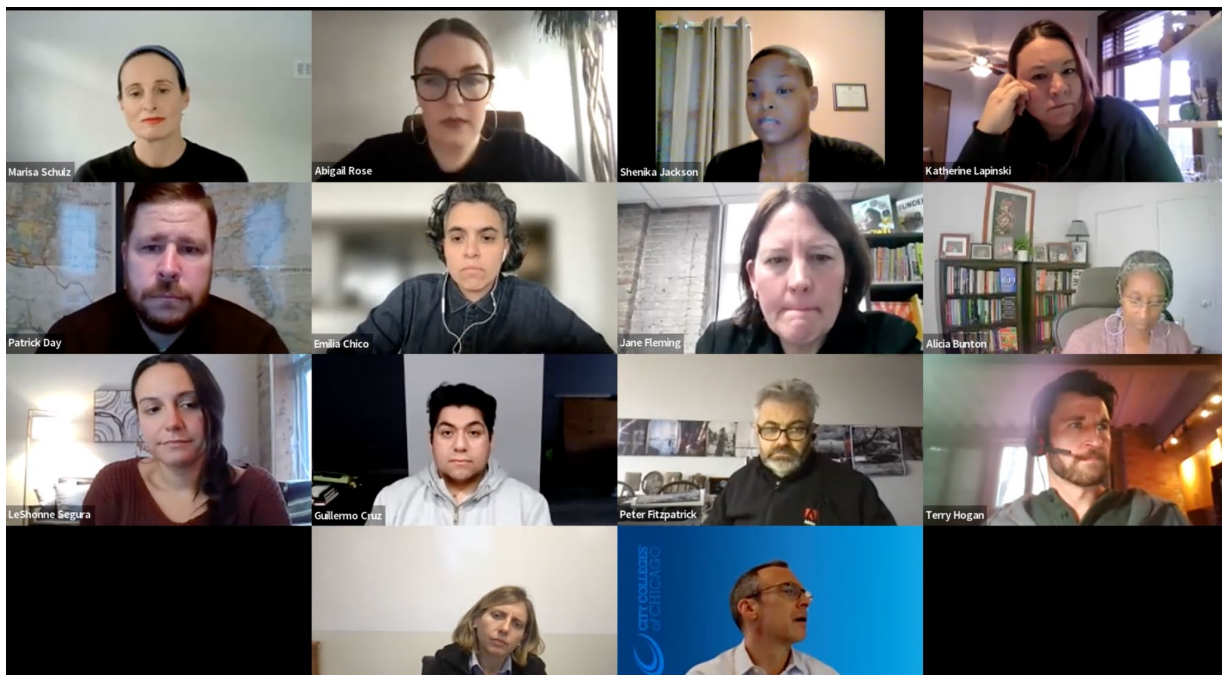
Life Long Learning Meeting #8

January 13, 2022, 2:00PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Jonah Nink

ATTENDEES

- Marisa Schulz
- Mariana Garcia Torres
- Aimee Davis
- Guillermo Cruz
- Kathleen Dickhut
- Peter Fitzpatrick
- Renuka Sharma
- Terry Hogan
- Abigail Rose
- Adam Levine
- Jacob Watson
- Matie Ovalle
- Quenna Barrett
- Shenika Jackson
- LeShonne Segura
- Emilia Chico
- Mark Potter
- Alicia Bunton
- Katherine Lapinski
- Patrick Day
- Rebecca Amato
- Jane Fleming
- Meida McNeal



MEETING GOAL

Finalize final pillar objective drafts and discuss innovative policy ideas.

WHERE WE ARE



Step 1

We Are*Setting the Stage*

Step 2

We Have and Need*Develop A Policy Toolkit*

Step 3

We Will*Set Policy Framework*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

Guest Speaker LeShonne Segura's presentation on Community Hubs provided insight into a creative approach to solving the issue of vacant facilities within Chicago Public Schools (CPS). These hubs could not only fill the space but provide students with activities, internships and other learning opportunities that would not normally be available.

2

The continued decline in public school enrollment across Chicago and the nation has slowly become the driving force in educational policy discussion.

3

The amount of unused space within CPS schools is eye-opening. LeShonne Segura noted that 36 open CPS schools had a total of 20,000 square feet of unused space, and that's not counting schools that have closed. Utilizing this extra space in a way that benefits the learning process will be a challenge.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

“What we’re asking for inside of our school buildings is not new. Some of these schools that are empty ... used to have these services. Because of divestment, they have lost that. All they want is it back.”

LeShonne Segura | Kids First Chicago, Director of Special Projects

“I think if we go the community learning hub route, anyone in that neighboring community benefits.”

Emilia Chico | University of Illinois Chicago, Clinical Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology

“These are schools that are operating with only 100 students, but they can house a cafe for parents to sit and have a cup of coffee with a friend while they wait for their students to come out from class. But it might also have a bank or a food pantry down the hall. And can that hub in one school be connected to another hub?”

LeShonne Segura | Kids First Chicago, Director of Special Projects

“CPS tends not to sell the buildings or provide assistance to entities that lease them. The Timothy Corporation is a good example of that. They were running intergenerational community programs out of a shuttered CPS school on Drexel. CPS would have to operate differently to make this an effective solution for community-based hubs.”

Alicia Bunton | Illinois Institute of Technology, Assistant Vice President of Community Affairs

NOTES

Community Partner Update from Mariana Garcia Torres and Matie Ovalle

- Parents wished they had more services geared toward Spanish speakers and diverse learners, such as students on the autism spectrum.
- It was felt that professionals they were able to find were not bilingual or culturally sensitive to their identities.
- There was a general lack of information for accessing available programs, and it was recommended that information be provided directly through churches or schools, with less of a focus on electronic sources.
- Another meeting is scheduled for February, with 25 parents registered to attend.

Mariana Garcia Torres: "Overall, our parents feel left out in our services."

Matie Ovalle: "We're looking forward to doing our sessions in person. Most of our parents love our sessions in person."

Report-Out Final Pillar Objective Drafts

"How do we create sustainable pathways to the workforce for communities who have been historically disenfranchised, including individuals negatively impacted by the criminal justice system?"

1. Create new quality training programs for 21st-century industries that provide guaranteed employment opportunities after completion.
2. Develop new workforce training programs and partnerships specifically for those negatively impacted by the criminal justice system.
3. Remove physical barriers and constraints to participating in the workforce.
4. Align educational providers and key employers to create well-supported workforce pipelines.
5. Reduce the financial burden of participating in workforce training programs.

Feedback:

- Multiple members recommended that the use of "physical barriers" did not make much sense and that the clause should be reworded to be clearer.
 - "Physical barriers" refers to how a space is specifically designed can impact a community, such as making space accessible for people with disabilities.
- It was asked if "historically disenfranchised" wasn't deliberate enough language, and if referring to specific communities would be more effective. Earlier drafts were more explicit.
- **Marisa Schulz:** "I think this is a question that has been posed to many different pillars, is how do we name these communities, but also don't become too repetitive."
- **Terry Hogan:** "It's important to call out the specific groups that have been negatively impacted, but where in the report that belongs, we also have an opportunity to be more specific at the policy level."

"How can we build on existing programs and academic curricula to create learning opportunities and deliver on personal growth?"

1. Validate and expand the work of existing programs in Black and brown communities.
2. Increase the equitable accessibility and quality of existing programs.
3. Expand existing programs to accommodate individuals at different stages of life.

4. Expand the reach and impact of Chicago Public Schools and City Colleges of Chicago.

How might we elevate existing social support systems to increase formal and informal learning opportunities?

1. Increase support for and access to childcare and eldercare.
2. Develop programs and create spaces that promote intergenerational encounters.
3. Increase support for individual and small business-led teaching initiatives.
4. Address inequities in pay and resource availability for educators and care professionals.

How can we expand the availability and accessibility of places where lifelong learning can occur, especially in communities that have been historically excluded?

1. Redirect investments toward facilities and organizations where limited opportunities for lifelong learning currently exist.
2. Create and support intergenerational community learning hubs in all neighborhoods.
3. Design a learning environment to meet the needs of all learners.
4. Reduce the financial and logistical barriers to accessing public assets for community program use.

Cross-Pillar Topics

- The Life Long Learning Pillar is in a unique place, since it shares topics with all of the other pillars. Members noted that this displays the value of education investment, as it can truly affect most other areas.

Pillar Metrics

- Meeting attendees were asked to rank topics relating to each guiding question in order of what they would like to see at future meetings.
- Attendees favored topics related to Park District enrollment, CPS college enrollment, Early Learning programs and the location of libraries.

Guest Presentation from LeShonne Segura

- CPS schools have seen a decline in enrollment since the 1980s.
 - The total CPS student population is 340,658.
 - Public school enrollment is down across the nation
 - Families have also been moving from the South and West Sides and into the suburbs.
- Historically, the district's response to lower student population has been to close and consolidate public schools.
 - Projected taxpayer savings are curbed by a lack of interest from potential developers in the buildings.
- The closing of a student's school has proven to have a negative impact on their test educational development.
 - "Students from closed schools received a long term negative impact on their math test scores; slightly lower and short-term effects for reading test scores." - University of Chicago Consortium on School Research
- Additionally, a moratorium on school closures and consolidations has already passed.

- “Community Hubs” are a concept in which schools allow unused facilities and sections to be used by outside organizations to provide services and opportunities that can benefit students, parents and faculty.
- Notable community hub-like models in Chicago
 - The People’s Music School leases Bronzeville Classical Elementary School’s second floor and provides after-school programs for students.
 - Crane Medical Preparatory High School houses a Rush University Medical Center health center, which provides opportunities to students including internships.
 - Muchin College Prep (a Noble Charter School) is located inside a building that includes several businesses.
- High schools in particular are ideal locations for community hubs due to their larger space and older student bodies.
- A Kids First Chicago study found that 36 open CPS schools had over 20,000 total square feet of unused facilities.
 - Austin and Bronzeville schools had the most open space.
 - Austin has seen a population decline of 20% over the past 20 years, according to the Austin Quality of Life Plan.
- Community hubs can expand beyond a single building, and potentially branch out to connect with other schools.

Emilia Chico: “How might city policy, or our work here, support these initiatives?”

Segura: “What we’re asking for inside of our school buildings is not new. In fact, some of these schools that are empty, they used to, like I mentioned, they used to have these services. Because of divestment they have lost that. All they want is it back.”

Policy Breakout Groups

- Members were asked to creatively rethink how closed and underutilized CPS schools can be used.
- Both groups #1 and #2 had positive opinions about how community hubs have the ability to utilize empty space and maximize the potential of CPS facilities.
- Members of group #1 noted that one potential problem could be the management of community hubs. For example, would the school principal oversee all operations within a community hub, or would that fall to someone in a new position?
- Members from both groups also noted that a large redevelopment of school facilities would require the redistribution of many city personnel and resources.

RESOURCES

LIFE LONG LEARNING PILLAR WEBPAGE

<https://wewillchicago.com/lifelong-education>

KIDS FIRST CHICAGO

[A nonprofit organization that works to improve Chicago schools and education policies](#)

SCHOOL CLOSINGS IN CHICAGO: STAFF AND STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

[May 2018 report published by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research](#)

GHOSTS IN THE SCHOOLYARD

[Book about CPS school closures by Eve Ewing](#)

OP-ED: SCHOOL CLOSURES ARE PART OF CPS CYCLE OF DISINVESTMENT

[Commentary by Pavlyn Jankov published in the Chicago Tribune in February 2018](#)