



Attendees: Newt Thomas, Pat Getty, Charles McElwee, Tim McClung, Howard Suefer, Glenn Daugherty, Becky Ceperley, Karen Price, Pat Kusimo, Dan Foster

I. Welcome/Introductions

Committee Co-Chair Newton Thomas welcomed those in attendance and explained that the intent of the meeting is to continue defining the role of Vision Shared in improving West Virginia's Education System that would also translate into the achievement of the committee's goal of West Virginia leading the nation in reading and math scores for grade four and eight students. Mr. Thomas further explained the process involved in accomplishing these goals which includes discussion and understanding of initiatives, concerns and concepts for making change in the system. Mr. Thomas reviewed the agenda for the meeting and noted that he would like to begin by defining the top priorities for improving student outcomes.

II. Progress & Pressing Issues

Committee Focus

Mr. Thomas spoke about the Governor's Audit and its focus, particularly the improvement of student outcomes. He noted that the efficiency component is primarily directed at law makers. Mr. Thomas felt Vision Shared's primary focus should be in the area of what happens in classrooms and schools and his desire that by the end of the meeting, the committee should have more clarity in its focus moving forward.

Research/Efficiency Update

Charles McElwee began his presentation by reviewing West Virginia's rankings in various areas of education and performance. Mr. McElwee noted that in virtually every category, West Virginia was in last or near last position for performance. He explained that in 2008, the legislator stated a goal of exceeding national and international averages in all of these categories.

With regard to the audit, Mr. McElwee referred to a request from the Governor to Vision Shared to promote the recommendations found in the Education Efficiency Audit. Mr. McElwee began by addressing some concerns regarding what would be addressed at these meetings. Mr. McElwee explained his feeling that the efficiency and numbers of agencies involved in managing and administration of the public school system in the state must be addressed first and foremost.

Pat Kusimo questioned the purpose of the forum meetings. Ms. Ceperley explained the intent of the forums in particular is the engagement of the business and local communities

to provide an overview of the audit and key recommendations believed to positively impact student achievement. Dr. Kusimo offered the assistance of the Education Alliance in implementation of the forums; she continued by noting her understanding that public information and awareness is a good outcome for the forums. Discussion ensued regarding public perception of the education system.

Pat Getty noted his feeling that Governor wanted activity around the issue. Mr. Getty noted, however, the real issue that everyone has their own theory about the problem but well equipped panels can deliver information that provides a summary of the level of change needed to improve the system. Mr. Thomas explained that this is the intention, noting that the composition of the panel becomes critical to the nature of the meetings. Mr. McElwee explained that small groups of citizens are perhaps a better way to address the full scope of the audit; focusing each group on one key component of the audit - digital classrooms for example.

Dr. Kusimo questioned why this couldn't include both elements. Public engagement and the small groups Mr. McElwee suggested. Dr. Kusimo spoke about the process developed by the folks at WVU with respect to a larger process. Dr. Kusimo noted that three items were selected for further refinement including teacher quality and other issues.

Mr. Thomas feels as though the community forums can be beneficial in shedding light on the issues and identifying future activity. Mr. Thomas explained that there are so many pieces and improvement to the system at large. Mr. McClung noted that the Center for Civic Life will meet to discuss how to create a public discussion guide. Dr. Kusimo noted that informing the public is very important, but at a very basic level.

Howard Suefer discussed the involvement of the public in this conversation; questioning the validity of using the audit as the "Bible" for education. Mr. Suefer spoke about the need for accountability and words of caution in becoming too close to a candidacy. Discussion ensued regarding the process and parallel efforts.

Dr. Daniel Foster noted that the concept Vision Shared was asked to facilitate may not produce much result, but may only serve as political platform. Rebecca Randolph explained that it was her feeling that Vision Shared would issue a response of its own to the feedback from the forums - independent of the administration. Dr. Foster explained also that the administration must be willing to receive feedback and react.

Mr. McElwee continued in discussing the need for focus groups on specific items. He noted that these need to be young people that become engaged in the system. Mr. Suefer explained that in bringing the educational reality to the public, you can create a hunger for change among the people.

Mr. Thomas asked for consensus in moving forward with the community forum process, noting that this can be done in parallel with other activities. Mr. Thomas acknowledged the need for comprehensive change, and that thorough study is necessary. Mr. Thomas noted that it is import to engage individuals who can make the change.

Dr. Foster explained that it necessary for Vision Shared to have direct influence on the process and recommendations. Dr. Kusimo noted again that awareness and public information is very important.

III. Other Business

Review of "Stop Stealing Their Dreams"

Mr. McClung noted that education reform and transforming the educational system are two very different things. Mr. McClung posed a question to Vision Shared; "The sanctity of testing and performance based schools are rarely challenged - we focus so much on student achievement, there is little conversation regarding student dreams." Mr. McClung asked Vision Shared regarding the possibility of implementing alternative learning in the current school system? He noted that alternative learning has for too long been associated with punishment, rather than the nurturing environment it has become. In most cases, he explained, these punishments are most often better environments. Mr. McClung noted a passage from a behavioral policy from the school board.

Mr. McClung questioned if educational alternatives could be a consideration of the Vision Shared Committee? Discussion ensued regarding a teacher's ability to cultivate the individual interests of each student - given that they may vary so greatly. Mr. McClung noted that the possible isn't working so why not try the impossible?

Mr. McElwee suggested inviting those from alternative educational environments (Montessori, home school, etc.), to provide input on this subject. Dr. Kusimo noted that the issue is that standardized tests drive most all activity. Mr. Thomas explained there is openness to learning more about these alternatives moving forward.

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, August 7, 2012	3 p.m.
Tuesday, November 6, 2012	3 p.m.

IV. Adjourn

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.