

Collaborative Council

Council Overview, Structure and Function

Compact Background & Vision of Collaboration

In fall 2010, Denver Public Schools (DPS) Superintendent Tom Boasberg, the Office of School Reform and Innovation (OSRI) and all charter schools in DPS, signed a compact committing all parties to improve collaboration between the district and charters. Key goals of this compact include increasing transparency, equity and accountability. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided an initial grant of \$100,000 to support Denver Compact as one of nine similar efforts across the nation. In March of 2011 work began with the establishment of a steering committee and several working groups covering focus areas such as special education, performance management, enrollment, and funding. Building on the DPS Charter School Compact work thus far, Denver Public Schools and charter schools are now proposing a permanent District Charter Collaborative Council. This council will institutionalize collaboration between the two parties, and provide meaningful guidance and support to policy initiatives in the future.

Purpose of District Collaborative Council

The purpose of the Collaborative Council is to institutionalize a structure to guide policy discussions and initiatives between the District and charter schools. In addition, the Council will be a sounding board and advisor to OSRI as the department develops new systems, services and processes that support and hold charters accountable. The Council will both provide input but also surface concerns and opportunities that the charter community would like to address. Policy recommendations from the Council will be presented to the Superintendent and subsequently to the Board of Education, as appropriate. The work of the Collaborative Council will help ensure that charters have a voice in District policies and practices well into the future.

Council Structure

The Collaborative Council will be a nine member body made up of both district and charter school leadership. From the District perspective, there will be four leaders appointed by the Superintendent and to include at least one OSRI representative. From the charter perspective, there will be four charter leaders elected by their peers to represent charter interests. The four charter leaders will nominate a fifth representative to provide any additional perspective or experience that may be lacking on the Council. The Collaborative Council will have two co-chairs appointed from within, made up of one District representative and one charter school representative. Co-chairs will be responsible for setting agendas, leading meetings and sharing Council recommendations with key stakeholders.

Purposeful Representation

Charter school members should reach out to their peers for input on key issues and concerns. They should endeavor to represent their fellow schools to the best of their ability. In addition, when the Council proposes a course of action or policy that is adopted by the Superintendent, charter school members shall serve as spokespeople for that action or policy. District members shall work to engage the appropriate District personnel around key issues and concerns. District members shall

actively collaborate with their Council colleagues to remove barriers that may exist for charters to best serve Denver's students. OSRI will facilitate the Council's work, including formulating agendas (with member guidance) and communicating regular updates. In addition, OSRI will solicit input and feedback from Council members about the OSRI's work and initiatives.

Time Commitment

Members are expected to participate in ten meetings a year. Meetings will last an average of two hours. There will not be a meeting in July. In future years, there will likely be no meeting in December. In addition, members are encouraged to participate on working groups or task forces organized by the Council. The initial terms for elected Charter School Members shall be staggered such that half the members serve for 1.5 years and half serve for 2.5 years. Subsequent terms for charter leaders will be two years (staggered). The initial term for the appointed charter school member shall be 1.5 years, though subsequent terms shall be one year. Once elected, charter members shall agree to who will serve for which term length.

Working Group Structure

The Council shall decide which working groups or task forces to form around specific topics or issues. Charter participation on working groups shall be open and any school who wishes to participate shall be permitted. District Council members shall work to ensure that the appropriate District personnel are engaged on the working groups. Council members are encouraged to lead at least one working group and to provide communication back to the Council about the working group's progress. Working groups shall be issue-focused and shall work to make specific timely recommendations to the Council about potential changes to policy and practice in the District. When organizing a working group, the Council shall provide a clear initial purpose and action plan for the group. Groups shall not exist indefinitely. The Council shall be responsible for acting on recommendations from the working groups.

Meetings

The Collaborative Council shall meet the second Friday of each month. The schedule will be published on the OSRI web-site and communicated out to charter schools and District personnel. Meetings are open to observers and non-members.

Annual Progress Report

The Council shall develop a school-year end progress report that outlines the key issues discussed and considered by the Council, as well as any recommendations made by the Council to the Superintendent. The report shall summarize the work of each working group, including the meetings held, issues addressed and identification of participating members. Council members shall provide input into the report and the report shall be issued in June or July each year. OSRI will facilitate wide distribution of the progress report.