DENVER EDUCATION COMPACT
Board Meeting
December 12, 2012
1437 Bannock St., Parr Widener Room 389

Executive Committee Members Present:

Anna Jo Haynes          Landri Taylor
Cedric Buchanon         Linda Childears
Christine Marquez-Hudson Mayor Hancock
Donna Lynne             Robert Coombe
Elaine Berman           Steve Jordan
Helayne Jones           Terry Minger
Jerene Peterson (for Christine Benero) Tom Boasberg
Kelly Brough            Tony Salazar

Staff:
Lindsay Neil, Director of Children Affairs
Terry Bower, Denver Education Compact Director
Rhonda Williams, Early Childhood Education Director
Lisa Piscopo, Data and Research Director

Agenda and Meeting Objectives:
- Welcome and Introductions
- Member Recognition
- Members’ Core strengths and Operating Guidelines
- Priority Area 1: Kindergarten Readiness
  (Objectives, Strategies and Action)
- Where We Have Been and Where We are Going
- Concluding Thoughts

Compact Director Introduction
Lindsay Neil introduced the new Denver Education Compact Director, Terry Bower. Terry has 20 years of experience in planning, communications, and development, with a focus on higher education.

Member Recognition
Acknowledgement of first year accomplishments:
- Tom Boasberg thanked members for their support of 3A&B
- Lindsay Neil shared that she and Terry Bower had the opportunity to speak with other Compact models across the country and discovered that it has taken some other cities up to two years to reach consensus on vision and goals. Lindsay recognized that this speaks to the fact that this Board has consensus around the intent behind the Compact, its vision and mission, and that we are ready to move forward putting the strategies and objectives in place.
Mayor Hancock shared that today’s agenda demonstrates that the Compact has accomplished quite a few things in the first year and he thanked the Board members for their efforts. The Mayor also stated that the direction of the Compact will be very strategic for the Denver community and that as we continue to talk about Denver becoming a world class city, there is a distinct place for the Compact’s work.

Members’ Core Strengths and Operating Guidelines
Lindsay Neil recognized and presented the members’ core strengths:
- Fundraising and resources
- Advocacy (policy, programs, and business support)
- Leadership
- Subject matter expertise

The Compact wants to leverage these core strengths more intentionally and strategically as we move into the action piece of the work. Lindsay Neil informed the group that Terry Bower would be contacting them individually to set up one-to-one meetings to discuss how they see their role and the work of the Compact.

Operating Guidelines - the Compact’s strategies and objectives will:
- Have the best chance to improve outcomes for Denver’s children
- Have measurable impact
- Do not duplicate efforts currently under way
- Are linked to members ability to actively participate, and leverage their talents and capabilities

Priority Area 1: Kindergarten Readiness
Lindsay Neil presented a slide that reviewed the first goal: 90%+ of DPS third-grade students will be reading at grade level by 2017.

We conducted an analysis on the seven objectives identified in the last meeting to determine which are most viable for the Compact to pursue. We also added one objective (around volunteers) for discussion today.

Analysis of Goal 1 objectives:

1. **Increased access to books** - Based on the analysis, we found that increased access to books aligns with the work of the Compact, is measurable, and offers a unique space to build a campaign, something that the Compact can own.

2. **Small group literacy tutoring** – Based on the analysis, we found that this aligns with the work of the Compact, is measurable, and that while DPS is already doing this in some schools, there is a great opportunity for the Compact to take this deeper and wider to make a large impact.

3. **Expanded summer ELA academies** - Based on the analysis, we found that this aligns with the work of the Compact, is measurable, and that while DPS is already doing this in some schools, there is a great opportunity for the Compact to take this deeper and wider to make a large impact.
4. **Increased access to volunteers** – there was discussion that this might be a good objective for the Compact as there is a need for volunteers and especially the coordination of volunteers. It was agreed that we need to analyze this in the same way as we analyzed the other objectives to ensure that there is a clear need, that we do not duplicate other services, and that this falls within the core strength of the Compact. We will have a recommendation on this at the February meeting.

There was agreement among members that we want to limit the number of objectives under each goal so as not to diffuse efforts.

Lindsay Neil then presented a slide with a map that shows third-grade reading proficiency by DPS school and went on to explain that we will target our efforts on those 28 schools with the highest number of third-grade students not proficient in reading. This allows the Compact to invest strategically.

**Group Discussion Highlights:**

*Objectives*
- If we layer the various objectives that we have chosen, “flood the zone”, the Compact is in a unique position to significantly improve third-grade reading proficiency in these target schools.
- The real change comes in developing and sustaining the larger culture, because everyone has to be of the same mindset in order for us to really see movement.

*Transition from ECE to Kindergarten*

The Piton Foundation commissioned Bruce Atchison to develop a report about the transition to kindergarten. The Compact will get a copy of the report and have a discussion as to whether this should become a focus area.

*Volunteerism*
- There was a concern that getting ready volunteers into DPS classrooms had become difficult. DPS is working to improve that process. DPS does not do volunteer screening which takes time and is burdensome; instead, it partners with other organizations that have screened volunteers and can coordinate volunteer activities.
- There are opportunities to connect with the broader business community around volunteerism in DPS classrooms.

*Increased access to books*
- There was a discussion about partnering with Book Trust to begin working on the first objective: access to books. Book Trust is already in 14/28 target schools and could easily ramp up and reach all EC-2 students in these schools this spring.
- At Book Trust schools, students order $7/month of age-appropriate books directly from a Scholastic catalogue. They can build libraries of 18-20 books/year. Teachers also accrue bonus points which can be used to purchase classroom resources from Scholastics.
- 95% of the children in these schools live in poverty.
• It would be great if we could develop an alternative funding structure for Book Trust whereby individuals can access a Scholastic catalogue directly and purchase a book for a student. We will explore this capability further.
• Increased access to books could be tied to a volunteer program.
• There are promotional opportunities for sponsors of a Book Trust classroom or school.

Recommendations
• Make increased access to books a priority objective of the Compact
• Adopt small group literacy tutoring and expanded summer ELA academies as objectives for Goal 1 in partnership with DPS
• Approve $100,800 ask for immediate partnership with Book Trust in 14 priority schools and identify various options on how this can be supported
• Ask Bruce Atchison to make a presentation to the Board about his findings on the transition gaps between pre-k and kindergarten
• Extend February meeting to two hours so that we can allow time for a discussion about upcoming legislation regarding school finance reform. Bring in someone to present on this topic.
• Develop a larger blueprint for the Compact so that members can understand in advance where it is going and what is needed of them.

Where Have We been and Where Are We Going
The Compact has come together in a common vision, agreed on three priority areas, and three objectives related to the first priority area. The Compact has hired a new Director.

By the next meeting in February, the Compact will have fleshed out a strategy and plan to achieve Goal 1, and drafted a Goal for priority area 2 – high school completion. Members will have completed the member survey and Terry will follow-up with one-on-one meetings. Terry will also develop the first stages of a communications plan for the Compact.

Next Steps-Action Items
• Members complete survey.
• Members sponsor Book Trust in 14 schools as part of a spring rollout.
• Terry will follow up to get a copy of Bruce Atchison’s report and send to the members.
• Terry will send a list of the 28 target schools to members.
• Terry will convene an advisory group of members to help draft Goal #2.
• Terry will develop a blueprint/action plan for Goal #1 to present at the February meeting.
• Volunteer analysis and decision

Note: Terry has spoken with Bruce Atchison. He does not yet have a full report but she will be meeting with him in early January to understand more about the findings.

Next Meeting:
Thursday February 7, 9:30-11:30 at the Chamber of Commerce