THE DENVER EDUCATION COMPACT
Board Meeting
April 16, 2013
The Daniels Fund

Board Members Present:

Dr. Greg Anderson (for Dr. Robert Coombe)   Donna Lynne
Jill Barkin   Christine Marquez-Hudson
Tom Boasberg   Terry Minger
Kelly Brough   Jerene Peterson (for Christine Benero)
Cedric Buchanon   Cliff Richardson
Linda Childers   Dan Ritchie
Mayor Hancock   Mary Seawell
Dr. Steve Jordan

Staff:
Terry Bower, Denver Education Compact Director
Lindsay Neil, Director of Children’s Affairs
Rhonda Williams, Director, School Readiness Initiative

Agenda:
• Review of Shared Vision
• Two Big Goals Across Continuum
• Outreach and Discovery
• Goal 1- ECE-K Transitions Strategy
  o Analysis
  o Where We Are
• Goal 2-Concurrent Enrollment with Wraparound Services
  Career Pathway Discussion
• Geographic Focus - Southwest Denver
• Closing Items and Next Steps

Shared Vision
Terry Bower began the meeting by reminding members about The Compact’s shared vision “Success for every child, in every school, cradle to career.”

Two Big Goals Across Continuum
Terry reminded the Board of The Compact’s two goals:

Goal 1 – 90% of third-grade students will be reading at grade level by 2017.
Goal 2 – To increase the number of first-generation students who complete a postsecondary pathway and obtain a job.
Terry explained that The Compact does not yet have specific numbers for Goal 2 as we need to triangulate other pieces of data to approximate first-generation numbers.

A member raised the point that we should consider broadening the goal to include all students just as we did with Goal 1 and that we should have the same high expectations for higher education as we do for DPS. The Board agreed that we should have consistency and Terry will adjust the goal to reflect the entire student population. The Board agreed that within the whole population of students, we still want to be sensitive to the specific needs of first-generation students.

**Outreach and Discovery**

Terry briefly discussed the organizations and institutions with whom she has met over the past two months.

**Goal 1: ECE – K Transitions Strategy**

Terry reminded the Board of the strategy it chose during the prior meeting to achieve its third-grade reading goal. This strategy focuses on the critical transition between preschool and kindergarten, with emphasis on teacher preparation, information exchange, and parental engagement.

**Analysis**

Terry reviewed her analysis of transitions as a strategy for The Compact and highlighted a few important pieces. She explained that the environment is strong for pursuing this strategy.

**Strengths: Colorado State policies support transitions.**

- Race-to-the-Top Early Learning Challenge addresses kindergarten readiness, aligned data systems, professional development, and parental engagement.
- Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4Kids) focuses on alignment across P-20, includes kindergarten readiness assessment.
- READ Act focuses on building reading proficiency K-3, calls for aligning student supports across READ and CAP4Kids.

**Strengths:** There is a statewide definition of school readiness.

**Opportunities:** Piton completed a preliminary assessment on transitions and we have the report.

**Opportunities:** The timing is aligned with the new kindergarten readiness assessment and standards.

**Threats:** Principal buy-in can be difficult.

**Where We Are**

- The Compact has convened a transitions advisory group and is in the process of finalizing members and their specific roles.
- The Compact has begun conducting interviews with transition thought leaders across the country.
Many members participated in this discussion and highlights included:

- Terry has met with a local foundation (Buell) that is interested in transitions and will be continuing discussions with them about ways to formally partner and support this work. Piton Foundation is also interested in supporting transitions work.
- The Compact has hired a consultant (a national transitions expert) who will be producing two short reports that will become the foundation for its transitions work: 1) Colorado Policy Report; and 2) National Best Practice Report. Both will be completed by July 2013.
- Once the reports are completed, the Compact will develop an implementation plan with pilot schools, a phased approach, a budget, and opportunities for The Compact Board to engage in this work.
- Terry will be developing a communications campaign for transitions and is looking into using/licensing the name “Countdown to Kindergarten” to brand the campaign. All communication materials will be available in Spanish and English.

**Goal 2: Concurrent Enrollment and Wraparound/Career Services**

Terry reminded the Board of the strategy it chose during the prior meeting to achieve its postsecondary completion with job obtainment goal. This strategy focuses on expanding and strengthening concurrent enrollment offerings by reaching more qualified students and adding appropriate wraparound services during high school and throughout a postsecondary pathway resulting in job obtainment.

Terry explained that this strategy is much more complicated than the one chosen for Goal 1 as it spans three different systems (K-12, higher education, and workforce). She went on to explain that in 90% of her conversations with Board members, DPS staff who manage career readiness and concurrent enrollment efforts, as well as other community stakeholders, the notion of job obtainment keeps coming up. There was an agreement by almost everyone she spoke with that the end goal must be to help students obtain a job with a living wage.

**Career Pathways Discussion**

Terry reviewed two slides that provide an overview of Denver’s current concentration of jobs (provided by the Office of Economic Development) and a definition of Career Pathways.

Mayor Hancock led a discussion about Career Pathways and asked the Board to comment on the list of industries in Denver with the highest concentration of jobs in Denver. He asked the Board if we are preparing our young people from cradle to career to understand these jobs and pathways.

Cliff Richardson discussed the Colorado Community College System’s Career Cluster Model and provided handouts. He said that the Community College of Denver partners with high schools to help students choose career pathways. A member asked how high school students learn about the Career Clusters and Cliff explained that it’s through their high school advisors.

Many members participated in this discussion and highlights included:

- There is a need for more industry connectedness and internships.
- Concurrent enrollment in DPS has increased within the last year though there is still opportunity to grow and improve it.
- Concurrent enrollment is a now one of President Obama’s priorities.
- DPS starts assessments of career paths in middle school (students develop their career plans and there is an eighth grade career day each year).
• Denver has been discussing Career Pathways in one form or another for years and it’s time we do something comprehensive and aligned.
• Aurora’s *Paths to Prosperity* Career Pathways model is unique and effective; we may want to have John Barry present to the Board to learn more about it.
• Many employers cannot find local Colorado talent to fill their jobs.
• 67% of Colorado jobs require some postsecondary education; we are not preparing our students for current and future jobs.
• Terry has had a series of conversations with The Ford Foundation and they are interested in investing money into developing Career Pathways in Denver.

In closing, Mayor Hancock asked the Board if they would like The Compact to pursue Career Pathways as its strategy to achieve postsecondary completion and job obtainment. The Board supported this strategy.

**Geographic Focus – Southwest Denver**
Lindsay Neil presented maps developed by The Office of Children’s Affairs that illustrate why The Compact will focus on Southwest Denver. She reviewed numerous maps and indicators, e.g., high-school dropout rates, parents with less than a high school diploma, rates of poverty, to show that Southwest Denver has one of the highest rates of cumulative disadvantage in the City of Denver and so it is a priority area. Southwest Denver is also a priority for The Office of Children’s Affairs.

Other points of discussion included:

• We need to include and coordinate with the many non-profits in this area.
• Work and resources have been brought to the Northeast Corridor. We have learned a lot from these efforts and can borrow the best while focusing on Southwest Denver.
• To be successful, we need to engage young mothers with young children; they must be a part of this effort.
• It was noted that there was no map showing race and that if there was such a map, it would reinforce why we have one of the largest achievement gaps between white students and students of color.

In closing, Mayor Hancock asked the members if they agreed that The Compact should focus on the Southwest corridor and the Board fully agreed.

**Next Steps**
• Terry will follow up with The Ford Foundation to move forward on a Career Pathways planning grant for Denver.
• Terry will follow up with Paul Washington with the City’s Office of Economic Development to update him on The Compact’s decision and collaborate moving forward.
• The Compact will be moving to quarterly meetings. The next meeting will be August 12 at 3:00pm. Location has not yet been determined.
• The Compact will have its foundational reports for its transition strategy by July 2013 and Terry will share these with the Board.
• Terry will be developing a communications campaign for The Compact’s transitions work.