



INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL TURNAROUNDS MEETING MINUTES

August 21, 2014

Indiana Statehouse
Room 431
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Board Members Present: Daniel Elsener and Sarah O'Brien. Tony Walker attended by phone. Additionally, Claire Fiddian-Green and Bob Guffin were present.

Overview of Purpose of Committee - Dan Elsener, Chair

Mr. Elsener welcomed everyone to the meeting. He said the SBOE has a moral obligation to work toward quality education for all students, regardless of where they live, and that it is something that needs addressed now, not some time in the future.

History of School Turnaround Efforts in Indiana - Claire Fiddian-Green

School year 2009-2010 was the first time a school fell into public law 221 requirements. In school year 2010-2011, 23 schools were on track for possible intervention by SBOE. Sixteen of twenty-three made improvements to avoid being placed into the intervention category. The other 7 remained for SBOE to act on: one in Gary and six in IPS. SBOE moved to act in 2011.

Charter Schools USA: Turnaround School Operator for Emma Donnan, Howe, Manual - Jon and Sherry Hage CSUSA

Jon and Sherry Hage presented on behalf of Charter Schools USA (CSUSA). View their presentation online at: <http://www.in.gov/sboe/2560.htm>.

Mr. and Mrs. Hage stated IPS does a good job of supporting CSUSA with facilities. They indicated they have a tri-party agreement to outline the support provided by the school district. Mr. Elsener praised this cooperation amongst parties.

Mr. Hage said once the defined roles and responsibilities were laid out, they were able to better assign those and it has worked well. Records and enrollment has been the most difficult process and access to student records and student enrollment remain a serious challenge. Part of this issue was that there was initially lack of clarity on who was responsible, including access to passwords, technology tools and enrollment systems. Graduation cohort groups included students we didn't have. Students were assigned to the schools who were never actually enrolled or attended, but they were still on their accountability side. Mrs. Hage said this is an area where there's an opportunity to create a better template. IPS is assigning "default students" to schools, and they're tasked with trying to track these students down, which they are still doing.

Mr. Hage explained that growth and enrollment continues to increase in all three schools. Emma Donnan is having the most issues with enrollment. He said that it is a unique problem because it is only a two-grade (grades 7 and 8) school and is something that has to be changed structurally, because as it stands, only 25% retention exists, which does not allow for a development of culture, community or growth.

Mrs. Hage spoke to safety concerns. Safety plan, access to buildings, cameras are all challenges. IMPD contract year one, and now private company in year two. Added some cameras, alarms, 30-40 doors have had alarms on all doors in all 3 schools. These are huge, open campuses, so tightening-up the security increases the safety of the schools.

Mr. Hage stated the toughest issue they have encountered is talent acquisition. Staff members are uncertain about the future of the turnarounds, which undermines retention of high quality human capital.

Mrs. Hage said first year students have lower scores, which would reflect the school they came from. Nevertheless, all three schools have achieved academic successes, increasing math and English scores. Howe and Manual are off the monitoring list.

Mr. Elsener and Mr. Walker questioned the feeder system and how it is affecting the turnaround schools' ability to really change anything. Mr. Hage agreed, and stated that if you do not intervene earlier there cannot be long term success.

Mrs. O'Brien stated she was stuck on the enrolled and missing students. She wants to know where they are and if they're attending at all. Mr. Hage believes having direct access to SBOE and working with SBOE will help this issue.

CUSA believes safety planning needs to be done within the larger community with all stakeholders. They want the turnaround providers to have more support, primarily from the state. They would like to see partnerships with education programs, an Urban Education Certificate, clinical experience hours, etc. They want the state to provide ways for education students to get involved early on.

One of their priorities is enrollment stabilization. They believe getting to children younger could solve enrollment deficits, making it more economically viable and academically successful sooner. This strategy would allow for more efficient use of spaces, which are not being used efficiently at this time. Financial support must be consistent and known throughout the life of the contract. The variances in SIG grants clearly hurt the schools, Mr. Hage said.

Mr. Walker asked about the feeder school issue and how it hurts turnaround academies. Mr. Hage said 36 months' experience shows if intervention not made earlier, there is less chance to get schools off turnaround status. Student achievement cannot only be fixed within the turnaround school, but community must change kids' lives earlier.

Mrs. O'Brien reiterated that it is important they know who is in the buildings during that transition year. That is something that no one could get a hold on. Comparisons are unable to be made during the first year of operation.

Dr. Elsener thanked the presenters, and pointed out the strategic plan of the board focuses on improving performance, developing human capital, and community involvement.

Tindley Schools: Turnaround School Operator for Arlington - Marcus Robinson

Marcus Robinson presented for Tindley Schools.

Mr. Robinson believes the reform lacks specificity. Mr. Robinson stated that the district was not a willing partner. An example was that Tindley was required to survey parents, but the school district was not allowed to have contact information, etc. An intervention needs to be complete and immediate. Takeover is more than structure, but also enrollment, the geographic space that feeds the school.

He pointed out that school violence persistence is not measured here at Arlington. The violence of the environment affected the students' performance before Tindley took over Arlington, and was a problem throughout his time at Arlington. They could not get access to student lists and

contact information to survey parents. Intervention has to be immediate, and it has to be more than just at the building level. He is proud of the work they've done, but believes they could have intervened with more kids.

Mr. Elsener asked how many students they have this year, and Mr. Robinson said they're on track for 350. But look at 400,000sf building is not economical to have just few grades—he agreed with earlier presenter that a K-12 configuration would allow for creation of community, but also gives authority to get to those students earlier.

Mr. Robinson believes it is precarious to think about fiscal funding from a federal standpoint. Need to have a conversation about the right business model for turnarounds. We need to make sure the model is sustainable, so that we are able to fund as many turnarounds as necessary. There are the same pressures as building an entire school district, with all its complexity, HR, accounting, business structure, as well as teachers, curriculum, students, and. Mr. Robinson said safety and security is a big issue. The safety approach has to be unique to the communities. Chronic poor academic performance goes with student infractions, which are not all violent. There are drug issues that are considered non-violent, that are emotionally violent. The State Board of Education must ensure the physical and psychological safety of every student in those schools.

Mr. Walker agreed with turnarounds being larger to address issues of whole district. The district not being a willing partner is a very real issue. If those decisions were made at a state level, he agreed, that the turnaround partner would have more control. However, parent and student choice is paramount, and losing that choice is challenging. Mr. Walker asked Mr. Robinson what he meant about arresting enrollment. This is a product, and if the product is good it will sell to the families. Mr. Robinson said he would want the operator to have control over the withdrawal system of students, and set protocols of student movement. This would allow the opportunity to find out the specific needs of the students and potentially move them toward better programs. Also, it would help the operator get out better, more realistic, truthful information to parents, community, etc. In his experience, parents were given very erroneous information from an outside source.

Dr. Elsener thanked Mr. Robinson for his work, his passion, his presentation. There is a system issue here that has to be addressed, clearly that was outlined in both presentations. He noticed that the schools seemed be in survival mode, with legitimate cause.

Mr. Robinson stated that the State Board must be warned that the turnaround schools, the districts, the principals and superintendents may try to retain students not in the best interest for the student, but because the income follows the students. Please be aware that the Board will step on toes, but must be there to do the best thing for the students, not just the pocketbooks.

Dr. Elsener asked Mr. Robinson for a transition plan. Mr. Robinson recommended to take it to a community school. K-12. Tindley did not have an implemented elementary program there, but transformation to K-12, by an experienced operator, who would provide access to all students in that neighborhood, rather than the high school level, would strengthen that neighborhood.

Mr. Walker said this conversation was essentially about the economy of scale. He asked if that should be a factor in choosing a turnaround operator; the ability of the operator to absorb the risk. What factors should we include in choosing a new operator in the future? Mr. Robinson said the loss of the promised federal grant was very damaging. Transparency of actual costs of the school was not there, but should have been. Mr. Robinson indicated that inaccurate funding forecasts led to funding issues. For example, they were told electricity cost approximately \$35,000 annually, but in March, they received a \$35,000 bill. They were told the building and the supplies inside were for the students, but then much of the supplies were removed and had to be repurchased.

--10 Minute Break--

Minute 1:06

The New Teacher Project (TNTP): Lead Partner of George Washington and John Marshall - Ian Scott and Jessica Varevice

Ian Scott and Jessica Varevice presented for TNTP. See their presentation on SBOE's website at: <http://www.in.gov/sboe/2560.htm>.

TNTP said they have been a secondary partner. They have an evolving theory of change. They used a 3 focus approach. First, they wanted to accurately gauge how the teachers performed in the schools. This required better collection of data, to give teachers better feedback for teacher improvement, build student culture, strengthen student performance, and allow for retaining best teachers. They believe districts need a singular focus and exceptional talent—these will lead to transformational change within three years. Better talent will equal better instruction to the kids. Successes include rating more accurately the teacher and student performance.

However, half of teachers felt they did not receive enough feedback to improve their performance.

More rigorous instruction for kids was not achieved, in part due to their limited scope in the schools. Their work has not been part of the school or district's larger improvement plan. Their scale of work has changed yearly. Turnover, yearly, has been nearly 100%, so they are spending all their time training new staff. Consistency is key. Clarity of accountability needs to be improved. Question is do teachers report to district or to TNTP.

The biggest lesson so far is that school leaders, district priorities, support and engagement needs to be aligned. IPS has not been adversarial, however the engagement and alignment of goals has not been there from IPS.

Dr. Elsener asked whether there was clear alignment with TNTP. The response was, not at his level; but he could not speak to whether that conversation existed at a higher level.

Mr. Scott reported that different lead partners gave mixed messages to teachers and principals. Prime example of the need to clarify the goals at the outset. Leadership has been a challenge for them. Building leaders and administrative staff turnover was too high. Role of the Principal has changed from operations leader to instructional leader. Principals don't have the skills needed to help their teachers improve teacher performance. Control over instructional coaches and principals was lacking due to TNTP's limited scope. Policies of the district made assessments and evaluations much more difficult. Principals could not wrap up teacher evaluations until fall, for our principals. They had to offer an incomplete evaluation, due to the teacher moving to another school in the district.

Ms. O'Brien asked how the Board could be part of the process going forward. The response was that limiting turnover would be very helpful. Also, consistent roles and responsibilities, clear accountability pathways for teachers would help. The teachers had two lead partners in one school, and they didn't know who to turn to. They recommend not having more than one lead partner in a school. They also recommended a clear scope of the work, as well as a well-aligned program that is part of a broader program for development and improvement being implemented district-wide. There is not ability for cultural shift for teachers to develop, if they are given three different evaluations by three different groups.

Mr. Elsener asked how TNTP would set up the authority matrix. TNTP responded it was to clearly guide the lead partner, collect strong data, and drive teacher improvement, while giving the lead partner the ability to oversee the instructional coaching team, as well as other parts of turnaround. Coherent instructional vision, stronger talent and strong leadership, centralized

through partner. Streamline the process around a singular focus, not one that competes with the school district.

Mr. Elsener asked if we know anywhere in the US where turnarounds have worked. TNTP answered that they've been successful in Philadelphia and Cincinnati.

Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) - Dr. Lewis Ferebee and Dr. Legrand

Dr. Lewis Ferebee and Dr. Legrand presented for IPS. Dr. Ferebee stated he can provide some perspective where they are now, a year into implementation, but would be difficult to provide historical perspective prior to their arrival. One of the things that will be helpful is the opportunity to be at the table in the conversation. Recommend the committee consider providing an opportunity for IPS and the take-over service providers to have regular meetings to collaborate to ensure we are working together and not apart. One of the challenges is there appears to be a "them and us" approach to the take-over process. Through a collective effort we can share resources. Through communication we can have a better handle on the transition of students, to and from IPS and our take-over schools. We can learn a lot from each other in regard to best practices and where we can improve in raising student achievement. There has been a will from IPS, CSUSA, and Tindley as providers, to have those conversations. At a point, where we need to formalize those opportunities so we can provide reports to the SBOE as a team, versus separate entities. Ultimately we serve the same communities, the same students, and we are more impactful together than we are as individual organizations. One of the aspects we would like to hear from the SBOE as guidance is the long-term future of this reform strategy, clarity of funding, and the structure of the model for the future. We know the financial model is not working for Tindley and some challenges with CSUSA. This information and insight will help us determine, do we need to consider sharing transportation services, school nutrition services, better utilization of school facilities. It is a model that will be transferred to IPS or another provider as a challenge financially because you have a very large facility but small student population. Would appreciate some clarity in the future regarding financial future. IPS sees the same challenges as Tindley. If IPS is the provider next year, IPS will have to look at Arlington in a different way, and operate it for 300-400 students, opportunities through PL 1321, address facility utilization to allow other entities to use the facility, repurposing the building in other forms of choice for the district is also an option. We need an idea of where we are going financially and structurally in order to make those decisions. We will continue the conversation with the Board of Commissioners in regard to Arlington and also potential for partnerships with CSUSA and if there is another partner identified for Arlington. Dr. Ferebee emphasized the importance of working together with the

service providers and IPS, we are more impactful together, than we are as two separate entities.

Mr. Elsener asked about the future of Arlington and possibility of K-12. Dr. Ferebee said it is difficult to identify a school if we close a facility, where we would move the students. We have an opportunity to think proactively and strategically on how we use the building and opportunities for partnerships. We have more schools in our corporation than we have students, so we have to think differently how to use those facilities. Anytime you move students around, you have a domino effect. We are not at a point where we could identify a school to close. Regarding K-12, we have a K-12 campus now and it is not the most efficient operation. If you think about how you allocate teachers on the K-12 continuum, it becomes a challenge because you have a small number of teachers at each grade level, versus a more concentrated group of teachers that teach across the same grade levels, which increases your efficiency. Ideally if it was a high school with a much larger student body, it would be the best situation for efficiency.

Ms. O'Brien asked how Dr. Ferebee sees the transition of Arlington. Dr. Ferebee responded he ideally would like to bolster student population, keep the facility open, and it be a more efficient operation. Ultimately it will depend on the funding. It will be difficult to operate the school with the current population.

Mr. Elsener said IPS wants people at the table early, and asked who do you want at the table? Dr. Ferebee responded it would be helpful to know if another provider will be selected or if there will be an RFP process to plan successful implementation. If there is going to be another process, we need to know in order to make plans for how the facility will be utilized.

Mr. Elsener asked Dr. Ferebee if an RFP were released on this transition, is it likely you would consider? Dr. Ferebee stated it would be a decision by the Board of Commissioners, but it would be good to know if that is a possibility.

Oversight and Monitoring Overview – Tamra Wright, Office of Education Innovation, Office of Mayor Gregory A. Ballard

Tamra Wright presented on behalf of the Office of Education Innovation on oversight and monitoring. See the presentation online at: <http://www.in.gov/sboe/2560.htm>

Ms. Wright focused on performance of the schools as to whether they have been making progress and stated they have. The role of OEI is to monitor to the schools performance,

analyze the data, and report that information to the SBOE. Ms. Wright explained the framework for monitoring and monthly report template. A master calendar of reporting requirements is used and shared with the schools. There has been a revision of the monthly template, to include both the schools performance goals and contractual goals. In terms of performance, we have seen improvement in all four schools, Howe, Arlington, and Emma Donnan. ISTEP data is not yet available for Manual.

One of the questions OEI has received is are the schools serving the same population of students. Ms. Wright echoed the sentiments of Mrs. Hage, regarding school population. Ms. Wright state the school is still serving the same population of students in terms of free and reduced-lunch students, the at-risk population, the schools are serving the same population of students as prior to the take-over.

Ms. Wright recommended a regional director for CSUSA, for which Teresa Brown has been named. Ms. Wright provided individual updates on each school for which OEI monitors.

Ms. Wright stated staff retention is greatest challenge. Mr. Elsener asked Ms. Wright to define long-term focus. Ms. Wright stated it is important for staff retention to know the annual projection of the schools, so teachers will know who the operator will be and for what time frame in order to provide teachers with some stability.

Ms. Wright said first step is to identify who is in charge of this endeavor, OEI does not have authority to mandate at this point.

Indiana Department of Education Presentation –Teresa Brown and Maggie Paino

Ms. Brown provided an overview of Edison, Glenwood, and monitoring in general. See the presentation online at: <http://www.in.gov/sboe/2560.htm>

Discussion and Next Steps – Claire Fiddian-Green

Claire Fiddian-Green presented the Work Plan to the committee. See the complete work plan online: <http://www.in.gov/sboe/2560.htm>

Adjournment

Mr. Elsener adjourned the meeting without objection.