

Far Northeast Community Committee Newsletter

“All Means All”

September 23, 2010

Our next meeting will take place September 28, 2010, at Rachel B. Noel Middle School. You will be asked if you are willing to extend the evening’s program to 8:30 to accommodate a packed agenda.

There is still room for you to visit the news schools planned for 2011 in FNE: Denver Center for International Studies, KIPP, and SOAR I. Transportation is provided, leaving from the Evie Garrett Dennis campus at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 25th. Call Amy Schwartz to reserve your space 303-486-8565.

FNECC Meeting 2 – September 14, 2010: Minutes/table and survey results

Far Northeast Community Committee (FNECC) members worked hard to assess the options for the schools considerate of FNECC Charges, Values, and Principles. Tables discussed the options in detail and worked to prioritize the benefits and challenges of the options generated from the work of the first meeting. The activity culminated in dot voting by table participants. Some table members contributed notes to explain their thinking. Non-FNECC community members joined together with DPS staff and A+ Denver representatives to share in an informed discussion of the FNECC process and the options being considered for each school.

A follow-up survey was distributed to 47 FNECC members and 108 community members. The purpose of the survey was to make sure that as much of the feedback from FNECC and community members is captured as possible – i.e. it was an opportunity to provide feedback once people had a chance to think over the options in the days following the meeting.

Ford

FNECC Table:

The Ford table weighed in **significantly more on the benefits for both turnaround and replacement** options. The table's assessment of the benefits of replacement relative to its challenges increased significantly from the first meeting.

The dot voting and notes provided by table members prioritize:

1. **strong parent/community engagement resulting in a positive working partnership;**
2. **new, strong leadership** at the school that creates a **cohesive, collaborative organization;**
3. the importance of **effective teaching;** and
4. the **challenge** of hiring **effective and committed teachers and administrators.**

Follow-up Survey:

FNECC response from the survey is **mostly consistent with the table work**, seeing **greater benefit for the school for both turnaround and replacement** options; however, Committee respondents on the survey appear to view turnaround more favorably. Survey respondents also prioritize the benefits of a **fresh start** with **new, strong leadership** for both turnaround and replacement options. There is concern for the **fate of displaced students** and accommodating them well to honor FNECC Principles. One respondent is emphatic that replacement should be chosen over turnaround. There were far fewer survey respondents from the community, and their assessment is mixed and shows greater skepticism for both options.

Green Valley Ranch

FNECC Table:

The GVR table weighed in **significantly more on the benefits for both turnaround and replacement** options – assigning **greater weight for turnaround.**

The dot voting and notes provided by table members for the **benefits of turnaround** prioritize:

1. **strong leadership** with real accountability;
2. **collaboration among all stakeholders**, including leadership, teachers, parents, and students;
3. introduction of **best practices;**
4. **high expectations;** and
5. strong **parent engagement.**

The table stated that they believed turnaround is **more likely to bring about sustained change than transformation.**

The table prioritized the **challenges** of both **disruption** and **parent engagement.**

Follow-up Survey:

Committee and community response on the survey is **mostly consistent with the table work**, seeing **both options as beneficial but turnaround as the better fit**. Survey respondents recognize the **benefits of new leadership, strong governance, a new culture** and approach, and the opportunity the change provides to form **strong partnerships between stakeholders**. Respondents recognize **commitment as the biggest challenge**, and also cite **high teacher turnover** and **significant disruption**, including **student adjustment to changes**, as challenges to mitigate.

McGlone

FNECC Table:

The McGlone table weighed in **significantly more on the benefits for both turnaround and replacement** options. The benefits are closely aligned with FNECC Principles.

For **turnaround**, the dot voting **prioritizes high expectations** for student achievement, **strong instructional practices, new leadership**, and a situation where it is easier to **implement innovations**. The **challenge** cited is the **need for a data expert** to support changes.

For **replacement**, the dot voting **prioritizes the opportunity of a fresh start**, a **global and diverse** education and curriculum, as well as additional **options** for families. The table also **recognizes the school as a good candidate for replacement** because of its **facility** and the **population it serves**.

Follow-up Survey:

FNECC response **weighed in favor of the benefits for both options**. Some **uncertainty remains** around replacement. FNECC's prioritized benefits and challenges are consistent with table work. Community respondents are few (total 3) and their input mixed.

Oakland

FNECC Table:

The Oakland table weighed in **slightly more on the benefits for both turnaround and replacement options**.

For **turnaround**, dot voting **prioritizes benefits of retaining students** in Far Northeast and providing **high expectations** for student achievement, as well as **new leadership**, while **weighting heavily the challenges of 3rd straight year of disruption and new leadership**. One turnaround challenge prioritized is that there are **too many areas that need improvement** and **not enough of a foundation for turnaround to build on**.

For **replacement**, dot voting **prioritizes benefits** of a **new culture** and approach, a **fresh start** with a **proven model**, and additional **options for families and children**. The **challenges** cited are that the facility is **not configured to handle 3 center-based programs**, there is limited understanding of **enrollment processes**, and concern for **displaced students**.

Follow-up Survey:

FNECC response from the survey is **mostly consistent with the table work**, seeing **greater benefit for the school for both turnaround and replacement** options. Community respondents are few (total 2) with one weighing challenges greater than benefits and one having no opinion.

The **benefits cited for both options are consistent with the table work** – with survey respondents also highlighting **benefit of new leadership**. The challenges highlighted **concerns over displaced students** and **ESL services**.

Noel

FNECC Table:

The Noel table **strongly supports turnaround**, citing that it is “**more likely to bring sustained change than transformation**,” and highlighting the benefits of **building a healthy school culture**, the promise of **new staff**, and the urgent focus it provides to create dramatic change in a short period of time. The table prioritized the **challenge of leadership turnover**.

The table weighed in more significantly on the challenges for the other three options, providing very **minimal feedback on changing the grade structure**, **mixed feedback on add/change program**, and **significant prioritization of challenges for right-size/co-location**. Right-size/co-location challenges include:

1. **KIPP may be unappealing or inaccessible** for some families;
2. Concerns about **displaced students**;
3. **Disruption** of a significant change; and
4. **Equity issues** if one school in building gets more than another.

Follow-up Survey:

FNECC respondents favor turnaround and changing to an arts program, but the response is mixed for changing the grade structure and right-size/co-location. **Community respondents are few (total 5) and opposed to all 4 options**.

The survey’s **prioritization of benefits and challenges is largely consistent with the table work**. There is **lingering concern** over **students** that may be **displaced** by these reform options.

Montbello

FNECC Table:

The table's output is evidence of a **rich discussion** of the benefits and challenges, with consideration given to full range of implications for all three options. The table weighed in **slightly more favorably for the benefits** of all three options. There is a **strong statement** by the table that the **new school must look different than the old school**. The table prioritized **more time for teaching and learning** and the opportunity change provides for **implementing innovations and new strategies**. There are concerns about the **perception of Montbello** and how it will **"stack up to the competition,"** as well as the **disruptions of change** and the **lack of guarantee for the new beginning to improve outcomes**.

Follow-up Survey:

FNECC survey respondents are **strongly in favor of the benefits of all three options**. The response from the community was small (5 respondents) and **mixed**. **Overall, respondents recognize that the benefits of the options outweigh the challenges**.

The prioritization of benefits and challenges is consistent, with strong response that the new school must look different from the old one and concerns over the challenges of disruption and no guarantees. In comparison to the table, **survey respondents weighed in more favorably on the benefits of new leadership and staff**. Comments provided communicate clearly that something must be done to move the school in the right direction. The survey communicates **lingering concerns**: 1. There is **confusion over co-location and logistics of phase-in/out**; 2. There is **significant "fear" that in the community that it will look like the Manual High School experiment in small schools**; and 3. There is a **perception that something is being done TO the community and not FOR it**.