

# Cincinnati Education Panel Agenda

## *Meeting Notes, November 16, 2020*



**Attendees:** Kent, Grant, John, Tara, Jeff, Sam, Bob, Elliot, Bill, James, Mark, Gary, Dick

**Guests:** Morgan Hill, Brenda Harris, Kathy Tyler, Carla Butler (all independent preschool providers)

1. **The Story.** All four of these women have amazing stories of entrepreneurial resilience and community service in a challenging field. They have wisdom equal to their big hearts, and these stories need to be told more broadly for the public and our leaders to understand what needs to be done to prepare our children for school and success.
  
2. **General insights**
  - a. Many parents want an indy provider because CPS can't always provide...
    - i. Christ-based
    - ii. Neighborhood based
    - iii. African American based
  - b. Many preschools lack
    - i. Teachers with cultural competency
    - ii. Diversity (either all black or all white)
  - c. Covid teaching challenges
    - i. Families with several kids at home tend to do less with their preschool kids because the other grade levels need so much help
    - ii. Social isolation hurts learning and motivation
    - iii. Lack of empathy on Zoom hurts learning

### **3. Challenges Faced by Indy Providers**

#### **a. CPS challenges**

- i. CPS is a competitor
  - 1. With the passage of the levy, CPS expanded its preschools and drew students away from indy providers
  - 2. CPS draws teachers away with higher pay and benefits (“we train, CPS steals them”)
  - 3. CPS doesn’t pay prop tax, but indy providers do
- ii. Indy providers have trust issues with CPS – not because CPS people act in bad faith, but because of the nature of these systems
  - 1. With the passage of the levy, CPS expanded and took students from indy providers
  - 2. CPS doesn’t seem to be recommending students to indy providers when the CPS school has a waiting list
  - 3. CPS doesn’t market indy providers well

#### **b. Enrollment challenges**

- i. Marketing is tough – hard to get the word out that they even exists
  - 1. One solution NOT happening: institutional providers (Children’s, UC, Xavier, etc.) could send their waiting list people to indy providers
- ii. Some parents think that CPS is “real” preschool even though the indy provider is 5 stars
- iii. More voucher hoops to jump through at indy providers but not with CPS schools
- iv. Covid is keeping families at home – and these providers already have challenges getting enough students
- v. Smaller enrollment also because fewer teachers due to Covid

#### **c. Staffing challenges**

- i. Low pay for a tough job means few applicants (CPS pays more with better benefits)
- ii. Many teachers won’t work where there is a perception of high crime

- iii. Teachers often leave because parent engagement is low, making their job even tougher
- iv. Covid is keeping teachers at home, especially older teachers
- v. HCJFS provides staffing support but the rates are too low, especially when they are trying to boost their star rating (lower rating means less support)

#### d. Financial challenges

- i. Not enough students = tough finances
- ii. HCJFS ended their financial support for paying lead teachers
- iii. State stipend for paying staff went away
- iv. For profit indy providers lose access to some grants
- v. Covid =
  - 1. Lower enrollment and tougher finances
  - 2. Higher cost because of protective equipment
- vi. Taxes are tough for indy providers w/o 501(c)(3) status

#### e. Lack of equity

- i. Banks won't lend them money
- ii. Grants can be very limiting and difficult to get
- iii. It's hard to know all of the potential resources available

#### f. Admin challenges

- i. One provider lost her star rating and tuition assistance because she needed to go on a "provisional year" when she shifted from home-based to center-based

### 4. Key questions/requested help

- a. How do we get the public to see
  - i. Preschool is SCHOOL, even with an indy provider
  - ii. Preschool teachers are PROFESSIONALS deserving better money
- b. How do we connect the NEED for indy providers in key neighborhoods to the available spaces at current providers?
- c. How can we find a way to pay teachers more?
  - i. And help pay for their training?
- d. How can indy providers truly partner with CPS

- i. Around marketing (e.g. “why you might want to consider an indy provider...”)
- e. How can we better engage and support parents so they can better work with preschool providers?
- f. How can we prepare toddlers for preschool? [Note: the whole premise of Success by Six is that the earlier the intervention, the bigger the impact.]
- g. How can indy providers have been access to teachers?
  - i. Marketing
  - ii. Community recruitment (with financial support for training)
- h. Need more gap funding to cover Covid costs
  - i. More testing of teachers like pro athletes get
  - ii. Need help from the health dept.
- i. Need grant help
  - i. Finding grants
  - ii. Applying for grants
- j. Recruit and train teachers from the community they will serve

## **5. Ideas**

- a. Extend Leader to Leader to support indy providers (like a SCORE volunteer would be able to focus on true business help)
- b. Create a peer network
  - i. So they can learn from and support each other
  - ii. Possibly get centralized outside volunteer expertise
  - iii. Potentially coordinate insurance or other group cost savings
- c. Could the levy provide a pot of money that indy providers could allocate as a group to their members (like CNBDU does with its city grant)?
- d. Partner with universities to
  - i. Provide indy providers with interns
  - ii. Recruit staffing for indy providers