

Thursday, September 15

Parent Advisory Commission Convening

Introduction

- Superintendent Truitt introduced herself and the purpose of the Parent Advisory Council. She began the meeting by discussing the separate educational entities in North Carolina and summarized what each entity's roles and responsibilities are in developing education policy.

Presentation

- Learning Heroes gave background to the 2022 survey as well as an overview of the methodology used for the study. (See attached PowerPoint)
- Learning Heroes then discussed some of the primary observations and results that were produced by the study. These included that 77% of parents say it is absolutely essential that their child get a two- or four-year degree, 75% of parents say they're confident their child will be ready for college, and 92% believe their child is at or above grade level in math and reading (this is contrasted with data that states only 35% of students are actually performing at grade level).
 - Superintendent Truitt added that the 35% statistic comes from NAEP and provided more context to the issue by telling the parents that only a third of NC fourth graders leave fourth grade at or above grade level for math and reading and 23% of NC students attain a four-year degree by the time they are 24 years old.
- Learning Heroes then continued discussion of the survey results. 48% of teachers say that grades measure effort more so than achievement. When reviewing feedback from teachers to determine how well a student is doing, teachers said the best indications were their personal interactions with the students and how well they perform on the teacher's tests; they said the less accurate representations of a student's achievement were report cards.
 - This is contrasted with the parents' feedback in the study, which demonstrated that parents believe the best indication of how well their child is doing is in report cards, and the less accurate representations of a student's achievement were benchmark tests.
- Learning Heroes ended the presentation by saying that one of the main barriers to parents truly understanding where their child is at academically is mismatched communication between themselves and the teacher. When parents are given multiple measures of their child's achievement (grades, benchmark tests, state tests, teacher feedback, etc.), the number of parents who say their child is performing at grade level drops from 92% to 44%, much closer to the statistically reality of 35%.

Discussion

Regional Group Discussions

- The group online mentioned concern over the amount of work teachers had to do; and how teachers direct their instruction and support towards different types of learners. They also expressed a desire to find ways to continue the efforts of expanded learning that came about through ESSER Funds and other COVID moneys.
- The Western Region talked about a disconnect between the parents and the schools in regards to knowing what resources are available. They wanted to hear more from the

legislators, and the school administrators to learn more about what is available and to hear their side of things. Additionally expressed concern with how to connect families of parents who are actively engaged in their child's education vs. those who are not.

- The Northcentral and Sandhills regions said the biggest issue was that everyone is behind: not just students, but the workforce, teachers, etc. They wanted to see a system that simplified language to make it so everyone - from the legislator to the grandparents - would be informed and knowledgeable.
- The Northwest and Southwest regions suggested making changes with reporting the data on demographics we do not look at often, such as Latinos, students with disabilities (SWD), and those with 'neurological exceptionalities'. After more discussion on the topic, they presented the idea that teachers and parents should work together to help bridge achievement gaps among students.
- The Piedmont and Southeast regions wanted more transparency with finances and curriculum. Concern was expressed about some counties only spending a very small amount of the COVID money, on the relative lack of understanding of what curriculum is, and on the impact of not having Universal Pre-K. They also discussed what public education really was and what role they had in it.

Dr. Taylor's Closing Remarks

- Dr. Taylor talked about the desire to understand what parent resources were needed and providing a better understanding of that to those in power. Additionally, he talked about how the parents serving on this board can be the parents' voice on the state level.