



#### **Redwood City 2020 Leadership Council Members**

Diane Howard, City of Redwood City  
Shelly Masur, City of Redwood City  
Warren Slocum, County of San Mateo Board of Supervisors  
Stacey Wagner, Kaiser Permanente  
Alisa MacAvoy, Redwood City School District  
Janet Lawson, Redwood City School District  
Kim Griffin, Sequoia Healthcare District  
Gerald Shefren, Sequoia Healthcare District  
Georgia Jack, Sequoia Union High School District  
Carrie DuBois, Sequoia Union High School District

**Redwood City 2020 Leadership Council  
Redwood City Hall, Council Chambers  
1017 Middlefield Rd, Redwood City, CA 94063  
Wednesday, January 16, 2019**

### **(Draft) Meeting Minutes**

**Leadership Council Members Present:** Carrie DuBois, Georgia Jack, Janet Lawson, Alisa MacAvoy, Shelly Masur, Gerald Shefren

**Executive Team Members Present:** John Baker, Amy Gerstein, Mary Streshly

**Other Redwood City 2020 Partners and Staff Present:** Elena Betts, Tatiana Baquero Devis, Maeve Johnston, Kitty Lopez, Sarah Norman, Patricia Ortiz, Nicole Prieto, Maria Marta Rey, Peter Shih, Derek Wolfgram

**Community Members Present:** Ben Packer

#### **Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review**

- Chairperson Shelly Masur welcomed everyone to the meeting, and reviewed the agenda. Introductions were given by all those present.
- Gerald Shefren suggested discussing the President's Breakfast reschedule. Shelly Masur announced the President's Breakfast rescheduled date, Friday, June 14, 2019 and explained the date change was due to staff capacity. Alisa MacAvoy added that recruiting more sponsors has been postponed until further notice.
- Shelly Masur proposed continuing the President's Breakfast discussion during programmatic updates. Council agreed.

#### **Oral Communications**

- There were no public comments.

#### **Draft Minutes**

- Shelly Masur requested approval of the October 27, 2018 Leadership Council meeting minutes.
  - Gerald Shefren motioned for approval of the draft minutes, Shelly Masur seconded.
  - The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **Improving Community Outcomes Through Shared Data**

- Shelly Masur gave background of the presentation topic.
  - Redwood City was a pilot city for the Youth Data Archive in 2006, which has served as a tool for policy makers to make more informed decisions. Milbrey McLaughlin, the founder of the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities wanted to create data

collaboration across different governmental and private sectors in the community to be able to answer complex questions, leading to the current efforts.

- Amy Gerstein, Executive Director of the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, began her presentation sharing that the idea for the presentation came from Leadership Council members' curiosity about the Gardner Center's research done in collaboration with Redwood City 2020.
- In order for communities to come together to answer questions that no one entity could answer on their own and affect change, Redwood City 2020 and the Gardner Center engaged in community collaborative research, leading to the Youth Data Archive.
  - The John Gardner Center investigates how settings and systems interact with individuals/youth. They use classic inquiry strategies, including identifying a problem and developing a plan. Based on John Gardner's philosophy the research focuses on community change.
- Youth are at the center of the Gardner Center's research. However, youth participate in many organizations and activities such as schools, families, religious institutions etc. Often, data of youth experiences in every sector is siloed. One of The Gardner Center's goals in collaboration with Redwood City 2020 is to create a linked data framework, and people engaging in collaborative research.
  - Amy Gerstein mentioned that this type of thinking urges participants to shift their thinking from "those are not our kids" to "they are all our kids."
- An example of collaborative research is the chronic absence study done in Redwood City. The study used *integrated data linking*, in which data was aggregated from multiple sources to find relationships and ultimately inform opportunities for action.
- In 2009, the Redwood City School District and Sequoia Union High School District superintendents, while serving on the Redwood City 2020 Executive Committee, (now the Executive Team), identified truancy as a challenge in Redwood City schools. The Gardner Center was asked to explore their questions regarding this challenge.
  - The Gardner Center defined and differentiated truancy and chronic absence. Truancy is defined as 3 days of absence, whereas chronic absence is missing 10% or more of a school year.
  - At the time of the study, chronic absenteeism was not yet a part of the national conversation. This study helped propel chronic absenteeism into the national discussion.
  - The following research questions were developed:
    - What are the characteristics and factors correlated with student absenteeism?
    - What are the longitudinal outcomes for students and what interventions exist to assist them?
  - The San Mateo County Human Services Agency collaborated in the research when it was identified that chronically absent students may be receiving services through their agency.
- The full study on chronic absenteeism is available through the Gardner Center and provided as an attachment. Although the data from the original study is a few years old, it is still relevant.
- Amy Gerstein shared graphs depicting the research findings. A major finding showed kindergarten as the school year having the highest number chronic absentees. However, chronic absenteeism often surpassed 10% in the following grade levels.
- The chronic absenteeism data raised other questions such as identifying differences in chronic absenteeism by gender, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status among many other factors. Other inquiries included the consequences of chronic absenteeism for students and predictive factors.
  - Researchers used regression in statistical analysis in order to find the extent to which is absence contributes to student achievement and outcomes.
  - Statistical models were also created to understand which were the most important factors and to what extent was absence contributing to students' performance and achievement.

- Researchers followed 3 cohorts beginning in kindergarten, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and tracked their performance for 5 years to understand what the biggest predictors of chronic absence were in these cohorts. The most significant findings are outlined below:
  - The strongest predictor of chronic absence in a school year is chronic absence in a prior year in elementary and high school, followed by 3 or more absences in elementary school, and being suspended in high school.
  - The Gardner Center team did not count suspension as an absence to eliminate confusion, since suspension can be a confounder if counted as part of the absences.
    - However, by following national literature, researchers noticed that some studies do count suspension as an absence, increasing confusion.
  - Finding that chronically absent students were more likely to be chronically absent in subsequent years created a sense of agency and urgency. It showed the big impact an intervention could have in attendance, especially in early years such as kindergarten.
  - Although the California Standardized Test (CST) is no longer used, at the time of the research it was used, and findings showed that chronic absence had a significant negative effect on CST percentiles in Math and Language Arts.
  - Additionally, chronically absent students saw significant drops in their GPA, and high achieving students (GPA of 3.0 or higher) experienced the biggest negative change.
- As a result of these findings, healthcare partners in the collaborative such as Kaiser Permanente and Sequoia Healthcare District reflected on how they may be contributing to chronic absence. The Kaiser Permanente representative at the time noted that when families ask for a doctor's note to be excused for the absence, pediatricians do not have a record of whether this child is chronically absent. It was noted that perhaps doctors may be contributing to this problem since they do not look at this factor.
- The Gardner Center interviewed the Redwood City Police Department for qualitative research and asked about the procedure for returning truant students to school after are picked up by the police during the school day. Researchers found that the police do not walk the kids in, rather they drop them off at the front door of the school.
- As a result of identifying several opportunities for intervention, a big communication effort was funded by the Sequoia Healthcare District and Redwood City 2020 along with the Gardner Center. Flyers about the importance of attendance were printed and distributed, with an emphasis on preschool, kindergarten and elementary school.
- The Redwood City School District hired an attendance coordinator, knowing that investing in attendance would lead to significant impact.
  - The existence of the attendance coordinator role helped inform why students were being absent. For example, one significant finding was that students had been missing school because of lice, which is no longer a reason to stay home.
    - This role no longer exists.
- Amy Gerstein mentioned that there were many other interesting and significant findings that she cannot cover during this short presentation. However, she wanted to emphasize that this research was born directly of the work of the collaborative.
- Other initiatives that the Gardner Center is collaborating with and using similar integrated data linking methods are the Early Education Collaborative, San Francisco's Bridge to Success, the Bridge to Success Initiative, and East Palo Alto's community collaborative.
- Amy Gerstein concluded the presentation by reiterating the Gardner Center's interest of supporting community driven research.
- Shelly Masur opened up the floor for questions and expressed appreciation for the work that the Gardner Center has been doing with Redwood City 2020.

- Questions and comments regarding the Gardner Center's presentation.
  - Carrie DuBois enjoyed the presentation and thinks that the research done in partnership with the Gardner Center has not reached as many potential stakeholders as it should, to inform the policy within the San Mateo County Human Services Agency or school districts. If one only looks at a counselor's data for the children they serve, then indicators for early interventions may be missed.
    - Carrie DuBois asked if the collaborative can increase focus on chronic absenteeism as a major initiative and intervene earlier on issues affecting attendance.
  - Kitty Lopez mentioned that many organizations are currently working on initiatives that look at chronic absence, but it is crucial to know where gaps in efforts exist. However, the key is to tie all the initiatives together since they each may have different data systems. For example, the Big Lift initiative looks at two years of pre-school and chronic absence. The Community Collaboration for Children's Success looks at the same districts as Big Lift.
  - Shelly Masur mentioned the collaborative can work on answering these questions together. All of the finalists for the Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year award were part of the Sequoia High School District, which highlights the need to look at these stories and how different interventions impact chronic absence.
  - Amy Gerstein highlighted that predictive outcomes and indicators have been identified through research and are now used across various districts and the state of California. These predictive factors are important in the process of classroom reclassification.
    - Longitudinal analysis of participation in Community Schools showed that Community School English Learner students reclassify as proficient in English faster than their peers, meaning the Community Schools initiative makes a difference for vulnerable youth.
  - Georgia Jack asked how partners can use the collaborative to help policy makers inform policies that affect children today. Although partners hear about achievement gaps, the dissemination of important and relevant research has been limited. How is the knowledge gap closed so that policy makers can have access to this knowledge across districts and sectors and align policy?
    - There was a general consensus that there is a knowledge gap.
    - Shelly Masur asked how other groups that are not within the school district can be a part of closing that knowledge gap.
  - Peter Shih asked whether the published data was different from other data in the literature.
    - Amy Gerstein mentioned that The Gardner Center findings have been consistent with the wider research literature, helping to identify kindergarten attendance as a particular problem. However, The Gardner Center's research is specific to the nuances of each community they partner with.
- It was pointed out that schools lose funding every year due to chronic absences.
  - Mary Streshley shared that the Sequoia Union High School District loses hundreds of thousands of dollars per year due to chronic absences. Although district funding does not directly come from attendance, grants and other funding sources use attendance to allocate funding.
  - Alisa MacAvoy shared that in the Redwood City School District, losses in revenue due to chronic absences reach millions of dollars.
  - Gerald Shefren suggested that hiring specialists to help with attendance could be helpful as the return on investment is high.
  - John Baker noted that the absence rate has been reduced since the study happened. In fact, the Redwood City School District still hopes to bring the attendance rate from 96% to 97%. The dashboard data tool, which the Redwood City School District uses, allowed the district to see that foster youth are particularly vulnerable to chronic absenteeism. However, now that the

district has a new cohort of foster students and because the group's needs may change every year, it may be an idea worth revisiting.

- Gerald Shefren added that when the Sequoia Healthcare District makes investments, he always gets informed on what other organizations are doing to better align efforts.
- Shelly Masur highlighted the significance of having these conversations through cross-sector collaboration. These conversations inform policy and are impactful to how partners invest their money.
- Patricia Ortiz returned to the original question of how to continue to work together around shared data and collaborative research. Patricia Ortiz mentioned that wrap around services are complex, leading to issues such as privacy concerns and even incompatible software to share data. The Redwood City School District uses about 11 data platforms for different purposes and are often not allowed to interact. The community schools therefore have to cross reference manually offline, significantly hindering impact and knowledge of what kids are falling through the cracks.
  - Amy Gerstein mentioned research institutions can get sensitive data if the data is reported in the aggregate. The Gardner Center can potentially help with this linking of the private data. There is a distinction between using data for case management agenda, versus for learning purposes. The Gardner Center as a research institution can support with the use of data and linking data to answer research questions.
  - Shelly Masur added that when local entities began sharing data, they prioritized keeping students' sensitive data safe, which has led to agreements with research institutions about aggregate data to prevent individuals from being identified. This agreement allows districts to ask some good learning questions.
  - Kitty Lopez added it is important for the Leadership Council to identify key questions to decide what to study. Data sharing does not mean sharing all private information, and there are pieces that can be commonly shared.
  - Peter Shih mentioned that this conversation is similar to many health care conversations about linking records to a common platform. Data sharing violations can lead to lawsuits. San Mateo County Health Systems is developing a health information exchange, in order to link information from different sources or alert case managers during certain events. Setting up clear agreements is very important, though some data is restricted unless in emergency situations. Health is related to the achievement gap, and linking data collaboration is a profound idea, in order to improve outcomes for the clients or patients. Clients would not object if there was a clear, outcome driven purpose for linking data.
- Shelly Masur mentioned that the Leadership Council had previously identified indicators to investigate, but have not yet taken action on. She suggests that the Leadership Council revisit the indicators and take them to The Gardner Center to study.
  - Amy Gerstein noted that not all indicators generated are evidence based and believes it is important that the Leadership Council makes sure to only work on indicators with robust evidence. Indicators set priorities which the Leadership Council can refine and decide if they are a good investment. The Gardner Center's job is to inform, not drive, and act as a resource.
  - Elena Betts Barahona added that there are indicators that have been selected for the Pipeline of Success, and those indicators will be revisited as we move towards the implementation phase of the Pipeline of Success.
- The question and comment time concluded with Amy Gerstein informing the Leadership Council that more research can be initiated at their formal request and added that fundraising may need to be done in order to invest resources for researchers.
  - Due to time, Shelly Masur suggested the Leadership Council continue the conversation at the next meeting. Additionally, updates from the Community Collaboration for Children's Success' local work regarding barriers to success will be shared at that meeting.
- ACTION:

- In the next Leadership Council meeting, Shelly Masur and Elena Betts Barahona will bring back previously generated indicators.
  - Agenda topic suggestions for the next Leadership Council should be communicated with Shelly Masur or Elena Betts Barahona.

### **Member Announcements/Good News/Kudos**

- Carrie Dubois announced that January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month and shared her involvement in the Human Trafficking Task Force, and that their new resolution has been passed. This area is a big hub for human trafficking, and it shows up at Redwood City schools.
  - Alisa MacAvoy requested that Carrie Dubois send the resolution so that they may see it.

### **Programmatic Updates**

- President's Breakfast has been postponed to June.
  - ACTION: Follow up details regarding the President's Breakfast will be sent to the Leadership Council via email.

### **Next Steps and Meeting Closure**

- The next Leadership Council meeting will take place in the Downtown Redwood City Library Community Room, as usual.
- Meeting adjourned at 10:27am.