

## Whole Child Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2023

### Welcome, Overview and Icebreaker

Jessica Horowitz-Moore, Senior Executive Director for the Ohio Department of Education's Center for Student Supports welcomed the Whole Child Advisory Group and introduced Dr. Wendy Grove. With Jennifer Vargo's departure, Wendy is currently the Interim Director for the Office of Whole Child Supports. Wendy is also the Director for the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness.

This was the last Advisory Group meeting for the 2022-23 school year.

Icebreaker – attendees were asked to identify their “superpower” – something that they are good at. This was shared around tables. This was later rolled into the discussion led by Gretchen Livesey with Turnaround for Children.

### Whole Child Implementation Supports

#### *Whole Child Network Updates*

Jessica gave a shout out to Hilary Stoll. Hilary, along with Advisory Group members Joe Spiccia and Matt Bowen, recently presented at the national ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) conference about the work of the whole child and what the advisory group has been doing. Jessica was able to attend this conference and hear this great presentation.

The Whole Child Program Administrator, Hilary Stoll, reported that since the February meeting, a couple of publications have been created and the most recent Ohio Whole Child podcast featured Columbiana County on their Coordinated Action for School Health Coalition (CASH). **Any updates for the next newsletter, please send to Hilary by May 2.** Some were presented to her at the meeting, and they will be included.

Whole Child Webinars – two since the February meeting.

- March – focused on the school improvement process and what federal funding sources can be used to support the whole child work. Advisory Group member Jessica Davies was a featured speaker on the webinar about the work that Montgomery County is doing for whole child.
- April – spotlighted one of the Whole Child school pilot sites. West Clermont School District talked about how they are addressing the root causes of chronic absenteeism through implementing a system of student supports.
- May's webinar will again spotlight a Whole Child school pilot site – Marion City Schools.

All webinars are recorded and posted on the website.

### Whole Child Network - Surveys

A list of the previous webinars including some data regarding attendance was shared.

- Whole Child Network - launched in January 2022 with 150 members. Has doubled in size to 308 members.
- Hilary stated that she was disappointed with the number of attendees at the webinars and surveyed the Network members.
  - Two surveys: first survey of anyone that attended at least one webinar; 2<sup>nd</sup> survey of those that didn't attend any webinars
  - About 150 members had been to at least one webinar – 33 of those have responded to the survey; 39 non-attendees have responded to that survey.

- Response rate of 23%.
- Some questions included on the survey were:
  - Primary reason for joining the network
    - Access to resources was the top reason and most indicated they were passionate about the work.
    - The lowest percentage for joining the Network went to webinars so may need to reframe what we are offering next year if webinars aren't preferred.
  - Favorite aspect of participation (just went to those that attended the webinars)
    - Accessing resources and connecting with other professionals were top ranking
    - Even of those that attended the webinars, only 39% said webinars were their favorite aspect of participation.
  - Other topics of interest
    - Family engagement followed by community partnerships and sustainability were popular choices.
    - The list was in line with what members recently provided via the SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis.
    - These topics of interest will be used to plan content and resources for webinars next year.
  - Engagement opportunities they would like for next year's Whole Child Network:
    - Current engagement opportunities are community of practice and newsletters
    - Proposed opportunities that were rated high centered around more personal interactions/connections such as facilitated conversations, a book club and virtual chats.
    - Also, an option, "no additional opportunities are needed", was chosen by 15% of respondents.
- Member satisfaction level with their participation in the network
  - 71% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied
  - 26% said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  - 3% were dissatisfied
- Follow-up was how did they choose their response regarding satisfaction with /participation in the network
  - Didn't have time to participate
  - Couldn't participate due to job responsibilities but appreciate ability to view the recorded webinars
  - Interested in connecting with others
  - Enjoy sharing information
  - Learned a lot of new material but want a training on "how to". This speaks to the work of the Advisory Group. We have the buy-in and support for the whole child approach, but they don't know the next steps.

### Whole Child Network Next Steps

- When the network was first launched as a pilot in 2022, only 150 slots were available out of 670 applicants.
  - Moving more to an inclusive model where everyone that is interested in whole child work is able to participate. Goal is for 450 members next year.
- Will incorporate a lot of this feedback when planning next year's webinar series.
  - Based on feedback, looking at stepping back webinars to every other month.
- Looking for other ways to facilitate conversations and networking.
- More community of practice cohorts— based on a comment made stating they felt last year the group was more cohesive.

## *WC FIT Updates – Implementation Supports*

Brittany Miracle spoke about implementation supports and what's next with the whole child work. As was reflected in the data and our experiences, our job is no longer to convince others this is the right work. We now need to teach and lead them how to do the work.

Feedback is taken to the WC Framework Implementation Team. There were three workgroups this year: one worked on the start-up guide, a second workgroup had a keen eye for communication- how the good work was being framed was important; another group focused on content development/professional learning opportunities and gathering information from the field; partnering with ASCD.

Last year, created a Whole Child Start-up Guide. The guide takes the Ohio improvement process or an existing continuous improvement process and mirrors it with the whole child practice.

### Start-up Guide:

- Drafted last year. Streamlined it (was 29 pages) – originally felt it was important to keep all the messaging from the framework so it wouldn't be lost.
- Implementation Team pulled out all the information that was already known (extraneous information that could be distracting to the reader).
- Gives a face to the work (informal networking). Will provide examples.
- Connected to ODE systems that districts are already using to plan (i.e., school improvement process) – connects to Ed Steps also connects to funding.
- Will be accessible on the website, likely a PDF/printable version.
- Hope to launch before schools start their planning for next year (this summer or fall).

## **Whole Child Knowledge and Skills**

Gretchen Livesey, Vice President, Partner Impact for Turnaround for Children shared about the work of their agency and the whole child initiative. They are one of the partners that have been called on to help implement whole child across Ohio. Turnaround For Children is an educational non-profit based around whole child (their entire focus).

*Activity:* Connecting your “superpower” to your core values (a discussion to connect to the “why” we came into this profession and do what we do). A handout with an extensive list of core values was provided to all. Members were asked to circle 5 of the core values that resonated with them. They then were to narrow those chosen to their top 3 and then their single most important core value at this time. Members then paired with another to share their number one core value. Members were asked to think about how their core values connect with their “superpower” and how do they fuel your passion (why you are here).

Gretchen shared a little about her background, a former English teacher now living in Portland, Oregon. She has been with Turnaround for 6 years. Her core values are connection, fairness and humor. Her most important is connection – felt vitally important and always struck connections with her students.

Turnaround has been around for 20 years/founded after the 9/11 attacks, founded by a psychologist studying trauma in NY city. She realized trauma was not just connected to that global event, was actually across the entire city and also that schools were not set up to support the mental health needs of students. So, this was the initial focus of Turnaround but over the 20 years it has evolved into a whole child perspective (output based/putting systems into place that support wholistic education). Their vision is that each and every child develop a context to be able to thrive and their mission is to take the science of learning and development and connect it with experienced educational practitioners to create actionable tools that educators can use in their classrooms to begin to do this work. They work with policymakers, state educational partners trying to spread the word about whole child.

Science of Learning and Development – five key principals that outline what pushed them to create their whole child focus. (This presentation will be shared with everyone and a QR code was available for more information.) Learning is integrated, unique in how they obtain their skills. Student voice is critical (how to act, listen and respond to what our students are telling us about the way they want and need to learn).

1. Development is Bi-Directional. Ongoing interaction between nature and nurture/our genes and the environment drives our development. There are 10,000 genes in our genome and only 10% gets expressed throughout our lifetime. These come from queues we pick up throughout our life, our experiences, our relationships and the environment. Brains are always changing/pruning, making new connections. Adolescents brains are very much evolving/ask lots of questions, changing as they grow. They go through a period of specialization, but the roots are still there.
2. Context matters. Opportunity and vulnerability -the brain's malleability is both depending on the context.
  - a. If in a healthy context – get lots of feedback and responsiveness. Serving and giving – getting back energy and helps you grow.
  - b. In a neglectful context – i.e., food insecure, violence, stress from cultural disparities - affects our brains.
3. Learning is Integrated. Stress is the worst effect on our brain's learning center- is like a threat and we go into survival mode. If in constant threat, stuck in survival mode and limits the area of your brain that affects learning/blocks pathways to learning. Stress can be reduced by producing oxytocin – love hormone. Simply a smile can provide a shot of oxytocin. Need to have this in the classroom – more positive feedback, be more welcoming. False Dichotomy: Lots of SEL programs but are isolated. Need to be integrated into building skills-teaching children how to relate to each other, to be self-aware-in the context of their academics.
4. Unique Developmental Pathway. ED Talk Video: Mary Helen Immordino – researcher @ USC (looking at people's brains while they are alive) – Inspired Learning. She has studied psychological and neurobiological bases of social emotion, self-awareness and culture and their implications for learning, development and schools. Video was shown for the group. Found that the region of the brain that controls vital processes also affects our social and emotional pathways. Deep learning activates the same system that keeps you alive. How do we engage kids in social emotional.

*In their groups, attendees were asked to give an inspired learning moment of their own and were then given the opportunity to share with everyone.*

Every child has their own set of strengths, needs and talents. But the education system focuses on supporting the “average” student. Gretchen shared a synopsis of a TED talk from Todd Rose, a pilot. The Airforce created a cockpit that was to fit the average pilot – planes were getting lots of crashes, thought it was lack of pilot training or planes jets but was the cockpit. Researched over 4,000 pilots physical features and determined that “0” fit the average. Designers were then required to make their designs flexible/banned the average (i.e., now have convertible seats in our cars) and can now have many diverse persons as pilots (not just the average). **When you design to the average, you design for no one.**

5. Student Voice is Critical. Ask our kids and listen. Need to know their stories and what inspires them, where they are struggling. **How can we begin to set up a system that lets kids thrive.**

*Activity:* What key principle is grabbing your attention and why? How is this related to your “superpower”? Discussion time and sharing out.

Context- How are we creating this context? How do we rethink how we set-up our classrooms to address this context? How are we listening to families and what they want? What works in a rural setting may not elsewhere.

Turnaround is here to ground people in these key science concepts that turn on people's brains. They have received funding to work in the State of Ohio to provide whole-child professional learning to two educational service centers. Currently working with OESCA on the selection process. **Can connect their work to existing initiatives – don't want to be an addition to the plate.**

Website: <https://turnaroundusa.org>

### **Whole Child Collaboration**

Members were given the opportunity to list accomplishments from the 2022-23 year (could be from the Advisory Group or for their agency/organization/district/school) and then priorities for the Advisory Group/what they thought was feasible to accomplish in the next year.

#### *Sharing out:*

- Accomplishments: state funding/school health opportunities, doubling the size of the network, launching the Whole Child Newsletter
- Looking ahead: missing middle/college-preservice teachers
  - Lexi Davis Romine/HS student member stated she is going into teaching and would like to see this whole child framework taught with all pre-service teachers- those going into the teaching. So, they will have this understanding when they begin teaching.
  - Brittany Miracle noted how they will expand recruitment at the higher ed level for the network (professors, students that would become teachers).
  - Tracy Taylor with the Ohio Department of Higher Education and an Advisory Group member were present at the meeting and offered to take this idea back to those in her Department and advocate for this.

### **Wrap Up and Next Steps**

This was the last meeting for the 2022-23 year. Meeting dates for 2023-24 are:

- September 15
- December 15
- February 23
- April 26

The first 3 meeting dates are from 10 AM – 12 PM at the State Library of Ohio. Brittany stated the last date is proposed to be a field trip, hosted in a Whole Child-minded setting. Members were asked to share any ideas with the Department team.

The sign-in sheet contained a checkbox to indicate whether members would like to continue with the Advisory Group next year.