



LEWISTON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Lewiston Subcommittee on Poverty
Report and Recommendations**

Presented to

The Lewiston School Committee

1/25/2021

Lewiston Subcommittee on Poverty Report and Recommendations

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Lewiston Subcommittee on Poverty Report and Recommendations

Background on the Subcommittee

The Lewiston Poverty Subcommittee was established by Lewiston School Committee February 25, 2019. The committee was convened under the following charge:

Lewiston School Committee Charge

“To assess and adapt the Harlem Children's Zone to Lewiston by creating and implementing with community partners, a City effort to reduce the impact of poverty on student success. This work will likely include:

- Develop an understanding of the ramification of generational poverty on student success
- Identify ways to partner with community-based organizations including ongoing efforts by community partners like the Healthy Neighborhoods grant work
- Identify and facilitate on-going related work within Lewiston Public Schools
- Identify the needed support from municipal and state governments
- Determine and track appropriate ways to measure this work.”

Poverty Subcommittee Members

A total of 15 community members were appointed to serve on the Poverty Subcommittee by the School Committee. The Poverty Subcommittee consists of:

- Bobbi Avery, Chief Administrative Officer, Lewiston Public Schools
- Mark Cayer, Mayor, City of Lewiston
- Shanna Cox, President + CEO, Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
- Peter Geiger, Executive Vice President, Geiger (until November 2020)
- Bill Grant, Director, Lewiston Adult Education
- Heidi McCarthy, Economic Development Specialist, City of Lewiston
- Monica Miller, Pre-K Coordinator, Lewiston Public Schools
- Fowsia Musse, Executive Director, Maine Community Integration
- Rilwan Osman, Executive Director, Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services
- Joe Phillippon, Detective, Lewiston Police Department
- Betsy Norcross Plourde, Executive Director, Promise Early Education Center
- Monique Roy, Former Chair, Lewiston School Committee
- Julia Sleeper-Whiting, Executive Director, Tree Street Youth Center
- Amanda Winslow, Principal, Farwell Elementary School
- Shawn Yardley, Chief Executive Officer, Community Concepts, Inc

The Work of the Subcommittee

Harlem Children's Zone

January 15th-17th, 2019 a delegation of Lewiston Public School staff along with multiple community partners embarked on learning about generational poverty through the lens of The Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ).

“In the United States today, more than 13 million children-nearly one in five-live in poverty. We know that these children face a future in which they are far less likely than other children to get a good education or adequate health care and more likely to enter prison. The odds are that they will not, by a long shot, live up to their full potential. But we must understand this: their future is the future of America” (Whatever it takes: A White Paper on the Harlem Children's Zone, 2009).

Harlem Children's Zone takes a non-traditional approach to disrupting generational poverty. Their model is to place a focus on the social, health and educational development of children while providing wrap-around programs that improve not only children's lives but also families and neighborhoods comprehensively and at scale. Several ways that the HCZ accomplishes this task is by transforming the physical and social environments that impact the children's development and it creates programs at a scale large enough to meet the local need. They also create a pipeline of support by developing accessible programs linked to schools so that uninterrupted support is provided for children's healthy growth, beginning with prenatal programs for parents and finishing at college graduation. The five guiding questions that the HCZ uses are:

1. What are your immediate needs of the community?
2. Who are the stakeholders to implement change?
3. How do we galvanize our stakeholders?
4. What obstacles are there?
5. What are the actions you can start modeling now?

For the last two years, the Poverty Awareness Committee has been working on addressing these five questions.

Overview of Data Review

In October of 2019, committee members engaged in a data walk to review available state, county, city and neighborhood level data including:

- Population demographics, age and race
- Educational attainment
- Poverty

- Employment and income
- Crime and geography
- Lead poisoning and geography

In November of 2020, the group revisited this data and added recent observations based on each member's work in the community. The group noted the largest percentage of children living in poverty were between the ages of birth to five. They also considered how the pandemic was exacerbating persistent inequities among the community's children, based on race, geography and economic status.

Overview of Results-Based Accountability Process

Shortly after the Harlem Children Zone visit in January, the work of the Poverty Subcommittee paused briefly with the onset of the pandemic. In May of 2020, the Subcommittee moved to continue the work virtually and to adopt a results-based approach to complete the remaining work of the charge.

The results-based accountability framework is designed to support community leaders in moving from fragmentation and competition, to aligned efforts and impact across organizations, sectors and systems. This approach shifts from a focus on defining the problems to declaring a shared result. The process uses a simple results-based action plan framework to help leaders move to action quickly and with accountability for impact. To prepare for this work, Subcommittee members read the publication "Theory of Aligned Contributions," by Jolie Bain Pillsbury and excerpts from the book Choose Results! by Raj Chawla.

Performance Partnership Model

From June to December of 2020, Poverty Subcommittee members held a total of eight virtual meetings. In these meetings, members used the steps of a Performance Partnership Model to ask and answer four fundamental questions to inform the results-based process and address key elements of the Subcommittee charge. These questions are:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know if we are getting there?

Kaylene Mitchell, a results leadership facilitator, provided neutral facilitation through the support of the John T. Gorman Foundation.

This set of recommendations represents the product of that work and those meetings.

A Shared Result for Lewiston:

“Where do we want to be?” This is the central and most important question. Subcommittee members created a shared results statement to guide the work ahead. This result statement serves as a call to action and shared accountability for change for the community of Lewiston. It is the north star around which community partners and stakeholders can align their efforts and together achieve greater impact for the people they serve. The Lewiston Subcommittee on Poverty authorized the following result:

The Lewiston Community/Schools ensures children are ready to learn and have equitable, measurable outcomes.

Subcommittee members recognize that no one agency, organization or program can achieve a shared result of this size and importance. Lewiston residents, community partners, schools, and government all have a contribution to make to the success of our children.

Indicators of Progress

The Subcommittee was charged with identifying ways to measure progress on reducing poverty. Indicators of progress ground the work in fact to establish a shared understanding of where things are and shared accountability for change. The Lewiston Subcommittee on Poverty validated three key indicators, or measurements, the community can use to track progress on the result:

1. The number and percent of children in Lewiston living in poverty
2. The number and percent of children in Lewiston who demonstrate readiness for kindergarten
3. The number and percent of children in Lewiston who are reading at grade level in the 3rd grade

The Subcommittee expressed interest and support for identifying additional indicators along the educational pipeline that could measure children’s progress from birth to the transition to adulthood. Ultimately, members agreed that the three indicators above, as well as a focus on young children, was the most pressing need at hand. The group believes these indicators offer a starting point to which future efforts can be added.

The group also noted that there will be work to do in the coming year to ensure that there is consistent and available data around the kindergarten readiness indicator.

Baselines and Trendlines

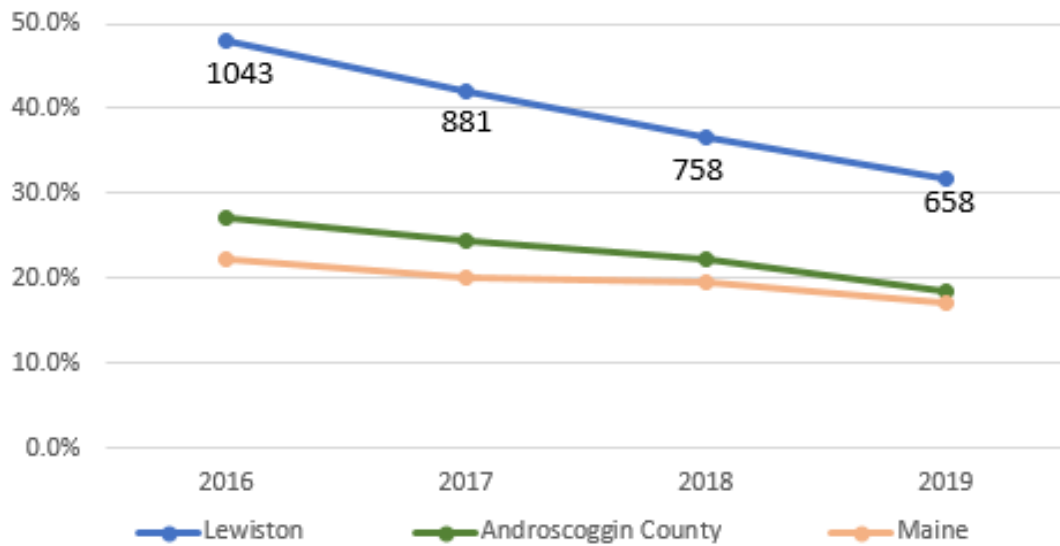
In exploring the question “Where are we now?”, the Subcommittee reviewed the data for these indicators in greater depth. Subcommittee members prepared and reviewed the data baselines, or most current data points, as well as the trendlines over time. Where possible the data was viewed in both number and percent to give a clear sense of scale, and the data was

disaggregated by race and geography to reveal the disparities that exist within the community. Here are some of the data visuals created:

Indicator 1: Children in Lewiston living in poverty

Over the past four years, Lewiston has seen a decline in the percentage of children under age five living in poverty. This follows county and state trends, shown in the graph below. Lewiston, however, still has a significantly higher percentage of children under age five in poverty than the state and county.

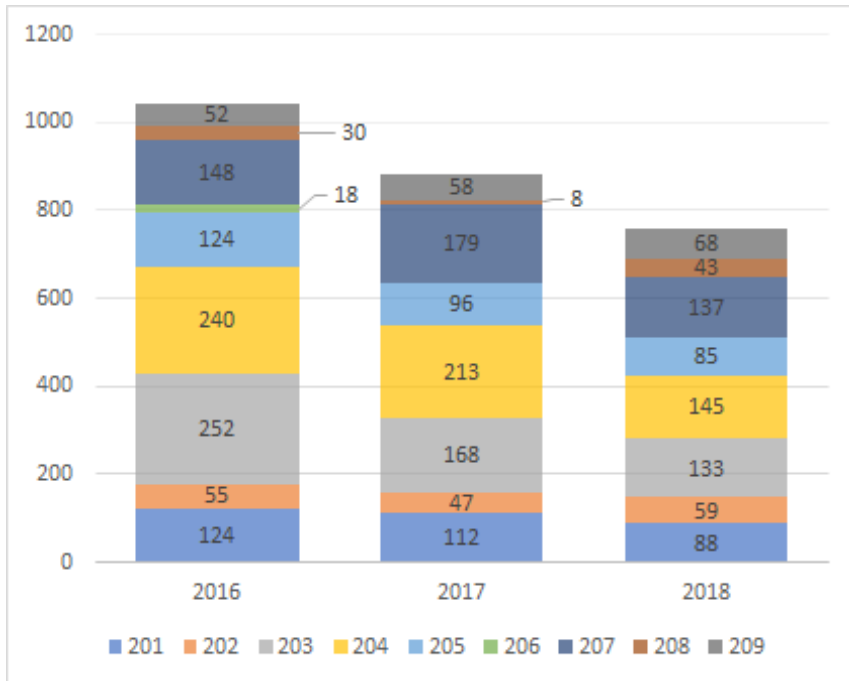
Percentage of Children Under 5 in Lewiston in Poverty



American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Table S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months

The graph below breaks down the number of children under five in poverty by each of the nine census tracts in Lewiston over a three-year period. This information was unavailable by school at the time of review. Although census tracts do not line up exactly with school designations, this data could be used to identify areas for intervention. A map of Census Tracts can be found [here](#).

Number of Children Under 5 in Lewiston in Poverty by Census Tract



American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Table S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, Lewiston has an overall poverty rate of 18.1%; however, this burden is disproportionately felt by communities of color, with over half of all Black/African-American individuals and over 65% of American Indian/Alaska Native individuals living in poverty, compared to less than 15% of white individuals.

Although individuals identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black/African-American, two or more races, and some other race account for less than 12% of the population of Lewiston, they represent over 28% of all people living in poverty. Data breaking down poverty by age was unavailable.

Total Population in Poverty in Lewiston by race, All Ages

Total Population, all ages	% of population in poverty	# of population in Poverty	Total Population By Race
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	65.6%	40	61
Black or African American alone	51.5%	1044	2028
Two or more races	33.8%	670	1983
White alone	14.7%	4335	29426
Asian alone	8.0%	18	225
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	7.1%	50	703

American Community Survey 2019 Five Year Estimates Table S1701: Poverty status in Past 12 Months

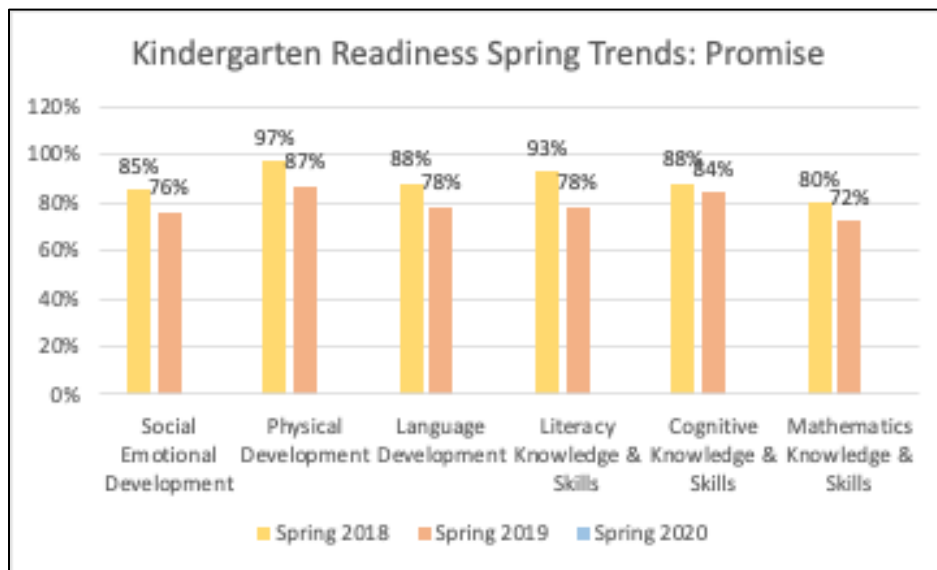
Indicator 2: K-readiness in Lewiston

The graph below represents the percentage of children who meet or exceed developmental expectations in the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System. Assessments are completed by inter-rater reliable teachers. Spring 2020 year-end data was unavailable due to pandemic. Baseline data reflects 109 students.

Baseline data for Kindergarten Readiness at Promise: Fall, Winter, Spring 2018/19

Children Ages 4-5 years of age			
Promise	Fall 2018	Winter 2019	Spring 2019
Social Emotional Development	35%	53%	76%
Physical Development	48%	66%	87%
Language Development	42%	52%	78%
Literacy Knowledge & Skills	27%	52%	78%
Cognitive Knowledge & Skills	36%	60%	84%
Mathematics Knowledge & Skills	13%	36%	72%

Trendline in Kindergarten Readiness at Promise: Spring 2018 and Spring 2019



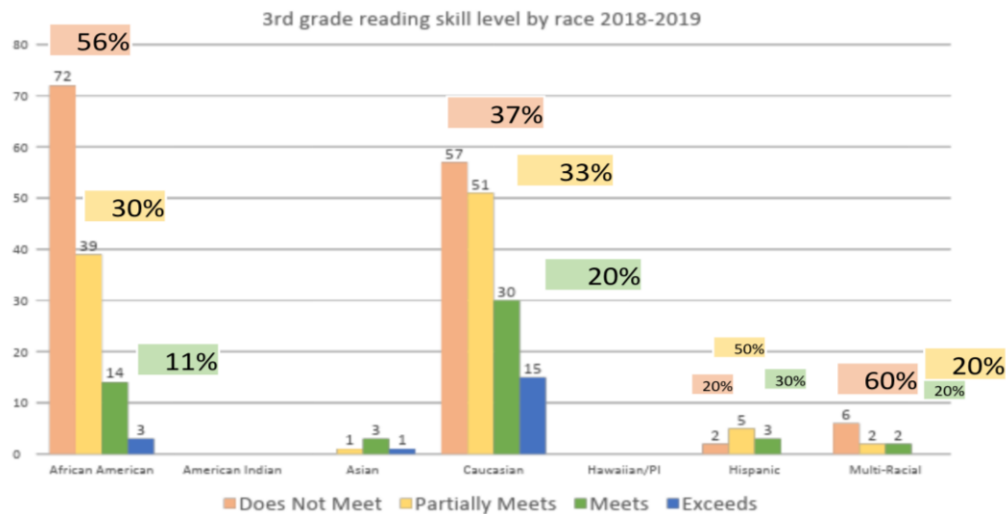
Note: Data was not available for Spring 2020.

The Subcommittee also noted that there is likely some important but achievable work to do in 2021 to create consistency in kindergarten readiness measurements and data access across programs.

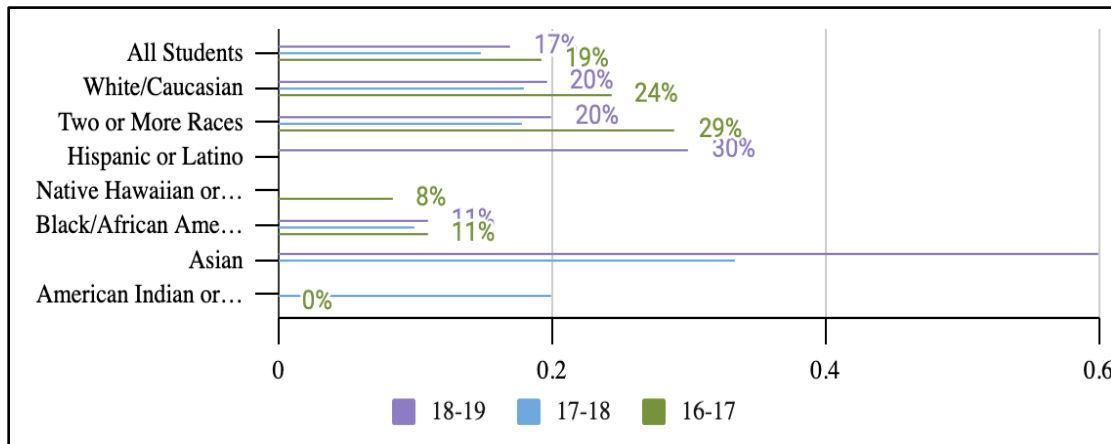
Indicator 3: 3rd Grade Reading

Third grade reading data is collected through a state-wide, yearly standardized test. Although a majority of all students are either not meeting or partially meeting the standards, more Caucasian and Asian students are meeting or exceeding than African-American or multiracial students. The trendline shows a decline over three years for most students, with the largest rate of decline among those students who identify as two or more races. Additionally, only 11% of Black/African-American 3rd grade students are meeting the standards, the lowest of any identified group.

Baseline Data for 3rd Grade Reading Levels in 2018/2019, By Race/Ethnicity



Trendline data for Students Meeting Standards for 3rd Grade Reading, By Race/Ethnicity



Data Source: MEA (eMpowerME) Grade 3 Reading Achievement Level Scores

Targets to Time

Just as measurements create shared accountability, targets to time create shared urgency. Subcommittee members used their knowledge of where things are and where they are headed to set and validate ambitious but achievable targets for change:

Children in Poverty

- **91 fewer children aged birth to 5 will be in poverty and the birth to 5 poverty rate will decline by 12%, by December of 2021**

Third Grade Reading

- **39 children, or 36% of children who do not meet or only partially meet grade level reading, will move to meet or exceed grade level reading by December of 2021. A minimum of 20 of these students will be students of color.**

Kindergarten Readiness

By December 2021:

- **100% of all incoming K students will have an identified medical home**
- **85% of incoming K students will have an identified dental home**
- **85% of incoming K students participate in or have access to supportive quality early learning programming**

By May 2022:

- **A minimum of 85% children who attended LPS/Promise PreK will meet or exceed developmental targets as measured by Teaching Strategies Gold standard**

The Subcommittee recognizes that no one entity can achieve these targets alone. This work requires partnerships, collaboration across sectors, and work both in and outside of our schools.

The Subcommittee also recognizes that the full impacts of the pandemic are still unknown, making it difficult to set targets for improvement. Members used the best available data they had to create these targets as a starting point and an opportunity for shared learning. If one or more targets are met, successful efforts and impacts can be expanded. If one or more targets are missed, partners can reflect on what happened and use that learning to create quality improvement and to revise future targets.

Areas of Focus

With a shared result at the center, clear indicators of progress defined, and ambitious targets set, the Subcommittee focused on answering the question “How will we get there?”

Factors & Best Practices

Subcommittee members used their best thinking to identify probable root causes and key factors that are contributing to the way things are in the community. For each factor, members also worked to identify and review available best practices.

Areas of Focus for Collaboration

To address the factors and root causes identified by the Subcommittee, members validated four key areas of focus for community collaboration:

- **Coordinated Services**
- **Equity Leadership**
- **Basic Needs**
- **Individualized Supports & Services**

For each area of focus, Subcommittee members identified the following potential areas of consideration to address and respond to some of the root causes:

Objectives

Coordinated Services Key Objectives

1. Create structures to increase collaboration around the three indicators
2. Fill gaps and eliminate barriers to service access and delivery
3. Evaluate and deploy resources to maximize impact/outcomes

Equity Leadership Key Objectives

1. Sustained engagement with community members and partners informs and supports equitable outcomes
2. Diverse and equity competent workforce
3. Engaged and equity competent leaders (school & community)

Basic Needs

1. Families have equitable access to resources
2. Families have stable, affordable housing
3. Community leaders have a shared understanding of causes, behaviors, and real-life local case studies of poverty in our community.

Individualized Supports & Services

1. Family navigators for families requesting services
2. Measured outcomes
3. Single point of contact for community requests

Recommendations:

Above all, the Subcommittee recognizes that collaborative work is hard work. It requires sustained commitment among many partners and organization and a willingness to align their efforts to achieve a shared goal. With this in mind, the members of the Subcommittee on Poverty ask that the School Committee:

Accept this report and recognize the completion of the Subcommittee's work under the existing charge.

And further, join the Subcommittee in recognizing that while the work of the charge may be complete, the work of ensuring that all children in Lewiston are successful continues. This work extends beyond the authority and responsibility of the School Committee alone. To be successful, this work must be shared across the schools, the city and the greater community. Given this reality, the Subcommittee requests that the School Committee lend its full support to a shared community process by making the following commitments:

- 1 . Affirm the result and key indicators as important, shared community work**
- 2 . Affirm the 2021/2022 targets as important, shared community work**
- 3 . Authorize the Lewiston Public School System to collaborate with community partners around these four key areas: Coordinating Services, Equity Leadership, Individualized Supports, and Basic Needs**
- 4 . Share data on the indicators of progress and join key partners in an annual community review of progress**

Limiting Factors and Key Next Step:

Subcommittee members want to recognize that a lack of community voices, particularly the voices of community members with lived experiences in these discussions, is a limiting factor in this report. Subcommittee members identified that convening these community members to give deeper insight into the factors at work and the plans to address and respond to those factors is a critical first and next step.

VI. Additional Resources

Report Resources:

- Link to the Presentation Slide Deck:
 - https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1OK0nmu2xen46RDLQsRd_qRg3W72TLOs6Fk64MltusCg/edit?usp=sharing
- Third grade reading data
 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W2kPXchqPCRfOM-uBuLBdBPV9_zN1afp/view?usp=sharing
- Kindergarten readiness data
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1opN5nHnnG06F2V1OpLZrWtrTrloB2uyH/view?usp=sharing>
- Helping Diverse Students Thrive
 - <https://www.educatemaine.org/docs/Helping-Diverse-Students-Thrive.pdf>
- Structural Models of Readiness
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uvpXhZfDcEJTsRdNPNhI6r5o9S1DAvw-/view?usp=sharing>

Subcommittee Resources:

- Choose Results! by Raj Chawla, Chapter 1
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bmz5YMMuE5ifYq49DADQ7eotQVHRD4s6/view?usp=sharing>
- Choose Results! by Raj Chawla, Chapter 2
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VuGY4bjuZijYHM3sriqcLLKllhtPRWj/view?usp=sharing>
- Theory of Aligned Contributions, by Jolie Bain Pillsbury
 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SB9zGpUSPzCVH2poAeZ5aUdeUZ3_vaz_/view?usp=sharing
- Subcommittee Meetings Roles & Tasks Document
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HDS2OhFrLoQ1OdEuQxnbQQsRCdWVHYKi/view?usp=sharing>
- Proposal Based Decision Making Tool
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WqmInkD2x2K-8VO589ejTGDTZj1uld0y/view?usp=sharing>
- High Action High Alignment Tool
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GExLGawutR55AZdPXlyYEQelioukedzG/view?usp=sharing>
- Results Action Plan Template
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hoxbAQ943dJwd6nN0-3k2sL46Gea5O-H/view?usp=sharing>