

Citywide Parent Council Meeting (April 28, 2015, Bolling Building)

Next CPC meetings: (at Bolling Building) May 19 (with Superintendent Chang), and June 16

Attending, CPC:

Mary Battenfeld: (BLA, Secretary/Minutes)
Sapna Padte: (Facilitator, Lyndon K-8)
Heshan Berents-Weeramuni (Curley)
Angelina Camacho (Hernandez)
Barbara Rosa: (Hale/Snowden)
Kenny Jervis (Roger Clapp)
Bruce Thatcher (Dearborn/Winthrop)
Ann Sousa (Quincy)
Maria Rogers (BLS, Henderson)
Bruce Kiernan (Warren-Prescott)
Roni Goffigan (Madison Park)
Annisa George (Perry)
Monica Cannon (Frederick/Burke)
Joel Thompson (BTU School)
Karen Shine (Eliot)
Marc Goldstein (Winship)
Karen Powell: (Mission Hill K-8)
Connie Forbes: (McKinley Elementary)
Nicole O'Brien (Condon)
Louisa Dowal: (Manning Elementary)
Beth Nolan: (BLA)
Krista Magnuson: (JFK Innovation Elementary)
Carolyn Lomax: (Holmes Elementary, O'Bryant)
Mary Pierce: (BTU School)
Maria Edsale-Farrell: (Roosevelt, O'Bryant)
Meghan Doran (Mattahunt)
Marie Zemler Wu (Mather)
Sierra Rothenberg (Mather)

Special Guests: Rahn Dorsey (Chief of Education, City of Boston), Ramon Soto (Director of External Relations and Opportunity Gap Initiatives, City of Boston), John McDonough (Interim Superintendent)

- **INTRODUCTIONS:**

What is a word that describes how you feel about spring? Lots of relief and happiness expressed!

- **APPROVAL of (March 24, 2015) MINUTES:** Beth Nolan moves to approve, seconded, approved, unanimous

- **GENERAL UPDATES**

- 1) *Superintendent Transition:* (Heshan):

- 38 people, one official parent representative (Heshan for CPC). Please approach Heshan with topics and ideas. First meeting will be Thursday. Will meet for eight Thursdays (3-6 pm)
- Listening tour: Superintendent launching a "listen and learn" tour and asking community input. CPC could host or co-host with other parent groups such as SPED-PAC, QUEST, Somali and Latino parent groups. Heshan, Kenny, will follow up on organizing a CPC listen and learn event.

- 2) *ELT (Extended Learning Time) initiative*: Kris Johnson (Mendell) unable to attend tonight's CPC meeting, Kenny read her email update based on notes from 2 ELT Joint Task Forces Meetings.

--BPS is looking into expanding partnerships to help cover extended learning time. Money to partners (\$1.2 Million) may be redistributed to help cover this, but this piece is still being worked on. Partners are submitting applications/information forms to apply to be ELT collaborator.

--The ELT JTF voted to select a funding formula for distribution funds to schools. A base amount of \$1000 per ELT school + an amount per pupil was selected.

--It has been determined that schools may need additional funding for specialists beyond the amount stipulated in the ELT BTU contract. Shandra Goldfinger from BPS has contacted budgeting to meet with them about this.

--The ELT JTF is creating a document to ask ELT schools what their specific plan is for rollout (schedule, extra curriculum, etc.).

- 3) *SSC Joint Steering Committee*: (Maria Edsale-Farrell)

- We have five members from CPC: Maria Edsale Farrell, Nancy Minucci, Karen Shine, Carolyn Lomax, Joel Thompson. CPC called meeting, but supposed to be Superintendent who calls. Won't be decision making until Dr. Chang is officially in office.
- Aim is to help SSC and CPC meet and to understand larger picture out there. Can have important power. Should let parent community know this exists.
- We met, discussed larger picture, facilities plans, doing outreach to schools on the joint steering committee. Discussed waivers also (for school start times). Schools can request waivers but not everyone knows this.
- The SSC bylaws are on the Curley site and on the BPSFamilies website:
<http://www.bpsfamilies.org/download/file/14-school-site-council-manual-2013-14-web>

- 4) *District Meetings/Community Dialogues*: (Mary Lewis-Pierce)

- Purpose and organization of meeting: These meetings, organized by City Council district, are to have dialogue with parents about the budget and BPS more generally. Goal is to educate parents on the budget and to empower parents to know they have a say.
- There have been two meetings so far (Councilor Jackson and Councilor O'Malley). Common theme has been transparency in budget planning and concerns about.
- Next meeting is in Tim McCarthy's district. Mary L-P will send out announcement/email about this meeting and others. Help is needed with organizing meetings in districts for Linehan, Yancey, Baker, and Zakim.
- CPC thanks Mary and Maria in particular for work, and asks that other CPC reps help with future meetings.

▪ **MOTIONS/DECISIONS TO BE MADE**

- 1) Nutrition committee: (Heshan) Discussion of forming a committee focused on nutrition in BPS.
- Purpose of the committee: To monitor BPS policies, budget, related to food and nutrition, and work with BPS on nutrition issues. Some members of CPC have

volunteered for a focus group, and testified to School Committee on proposed cuts this year.

- Discussion of the committee. Should it be ad hoc or regular? Connection to current health and wellness subcommittees at SSCs?

Motion: to form ad hoc Nutrition Committee. Passed, one opposed. Ann Sousa volunteers. More volunteers to be on committee needed.

▪ **DISCUSSION WITH SPECIAL GUESTS** (Rahn Dorsey and Ramon Soto)

Facilities Master Plan:

- Overview: have partnered with an education firm to see what BPS will look like. Not just a “brick and mortar” plan focused on buildings alone, but on education programming as well. Complete RFQ on the Superintendent’s website.
 - Progress to date: Have a project manager (Margaret Wood) and process that will put students at the center, with parents at the table.
 - Process: Three phases, all are starting
- 1) Citywide conversations with organizations and stakeholders like CPC
 - 2) Data gathering, figuring out enrollment projections, where people live, what are school feeder patterns, responding to Mayor’s plan for universal pre-K by 2020, etc.,
 - 3) Walk throughs of all 128 BPS buildings. Will look at structures, and also prioritize for urgent repairs.

Questions, comments from CPC members: (because of time, CPC reps wrote down questions to send later to Rahn and Ramon. Those questions attached after the minutes).

- We would like to reiterate request to have six CPS members on the facilities committee.

Reply: Haven’t developed the steps yet, but will be consulted. It will not be a committee though.

- Could you talk about implications in terms of demographics and neighborhoods?

Reply: Longer process, looking at the buildings, committed to community input. Will use data from U.S. Census, BRA to look at school-aged demographics.

- Can schools get reports of the walk-throughs and what was found and identified?

Reply: Yes, we will get that to you.

- How is this plan different from Superintendent Johnson’s earlier plan that closed schools?

Reply: that plan was more “fiscally purposed.” This is about looking at the infrastructure and also programs and figuring out what works best.

High School Pathways Redesign:

1) *Overview:* Starting to have a design conversation with the whole city, including community groups, business, charters, and parochial schools. Why? Though we are improving, high school graduation rates and attendance rates below where want them to be, and large achievement gaps remain across race, income, language and disability. Special problem of Black and Latino male students enrolled at disproportionately lower rates in AWC and exam schools. Shows video that sets out process, Mayor’s and city’s goals. Link to video and site for the high school design project: <http://highschoolredesign-boston.org>

2) *Process:* In first phase of public engagement. City/ Mayor’s office is holding a series of forums (see dates on website). First was earlier today. Want CPC to host a community conversation in a school.

3) *Goals:* Identify what we want our future high school graduates to know and be able to do? Looking at “whole child” outcomes. Given this, what do high schools have to look like to get to this? Looking at multiple pathways.

Questions, comments from CPC members:

- Request that meetings be in evenings so parents can attend (currently scheduled for mornings or afternoons) *Reply: Will do that.*

- How can parents be part of the conversation? *Reply: Organize meetings, be involved and attend “synthesis” group meetings.*
- Are you willing to reduce testing to make room for these new ideas? *Reply: Will have to balance and look at accountability. PARCC actually has good guidelines for learning experiences.*

Budget: Rahn, Ramon, and John McDonough (stops by for portion of meeting)

- 1) *Intro/overview (Heshan)* CPC has concerns with schools closings (Rogers and Eliza Greenwood Academy), impact on individual schools/loss of teachers, cuts to nutrition, transportation, data for weighted school funding; funding for extend learning time initiative/ELT. Specific questions and concerns:
- 2) *closures:* CPC has testified that closures should wait until after master facilities plan; should look at impact on groups of students (ELLs at Rogers) and programs seriously consider alternatives, such as student suggested merger of Rogers and EGA
 - Response: (Rahn Dorsey) acknowledges difficult to school communities but we had to make difficult decisions. Question is what does a viable school look like and how can be best spend available money? we are a district with buildings that fit 90,000 but we only have 56,000 kids.
- 3) *impact/“iceberg deficit:”* School Site Councils reporting losing adults (regardless of increases), such as teachers at Orchard Gardens. Parents want acknowledgement that there have been cuts and the impact.
 - Response (Rahn and McDonough): this is a long term conversation and we have to consider limitations to resources and that getting to a place of strength requires difficult discussions and decisions. Want to do a school by school program audit to see what we have and impact of budget decisions (ex. of West Roxbury Academy soing AP classes)
- 4) *nutrition:* critical to learning; the savings are not worth it
 - Response: This is very important to the Mayor. Wants to be sure we have the right food and the food students want.
- 5) *buses/middle school cuts and proposal to end buses for 7th graders:* don’t have enough data to show is safe; parents are concerned; focus group on girls and issue of harassment; Where is the data to show that it is working?
 - Response: We have made an effort to be responsive to student concerns; Task force and work has had good collaboration between Boston police, BPS, students, community groups, MBTA; we will continue to offer opt out, and have responded to concerns, such as from Cape Verdean families in Bowdoin/Geneva where MBTA rerouted buses.
- 6) *data and weighted school funding formula;* with universal free lunch, have lost accurate count of poverty data to determine weighted school funding; issues in particular with undocumented/immigrant families
- 7) *ELT:* Is it new money or a new fund? Superintendent McDonough: Both; new from federal grant and repurposed;

Action item: Rahn Dorsey suggested that CPC write a letter in regards to the BPS budget to City council, Mayor Walsh, and the School Committee and he would help deliver it.

Questions, comments from CPC reps:

- should be looking to create schools so that we fill those seats, and not close schools (comparison to a restaurant-want to draw more people and fill the place)
- what we need from the Superintendent’s office and City Hall is someone to fight for \$ for our kids; *Reply (Rahn); look at state funding (Foundation Budget Review); ch. 70 doesn’t reimburse at rate of cost for ELL, SPED, and health care; also larger conversation on income inequality;*

- How is the Mayor looking at PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) and getting more tax money?
Reply: good questions, but can be a messy political conversation
- How can we get parents into the conversations so we can set our goals and priorities for the budget? *Reply: (Rahn) I think there needs to be a finance team with multiple stakeholders.*
- How does state funding fit in? *Reply (Ramon) 10 years ago Boston got 40% of our funding from the State; now 10%;*

Conclusions, Next steps:

- 1) CPC will get a formal invite to be part of the high school design conversation
- 2) for budget, should sent letter (described above) and will partner with Heshan in work on budget and transition as Dr. Chang takes over officially

Agenda items discussed at this meeting for possible carry over to next (May 19) meeting:

- Statement and advocacy on remaining budget issues;
 - Meeting with Superintendent Chang;
 - Follow up on request to join Master Facilities Plan;
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Questions submitted on paper from CPC reps for Rahn Dorsey

Facilities/Master Plan

1. What happens if, at the end of 18 months, the recommendation of the firm is not accepted by the Mayor's office, parents, etc.? (Louisa Dowal/Manning Elementary)
2. It is critical that a master plan be ambitious- even the "low" recommendations! It also needs to take an unvarnished view of the problems/challenges, and the cost- to the students, to the families, and to the city- of doing nothing. The CPC and other stakeholders can fight for resources to carry it out, but not if it's watered down or understates the problems. (Joel Thompson, BTU K-8)
3. What about the Dearborn? 2-year delay on the building. Also, 6-10th graders all on the 4th floor of the Burke.
4. How will equity be imbedded in the plan? Concerned that basing just on demographics or buildings can lead to greater inequity.
5. Five years ago many schools closed and there was a plan that was about a 10-year plan. BPS has bamboozled families and caused havoc in our communities. Did the previous plan work, or was it just another way to spend/waste money? Parents are losing trust in BPS. How will you regain parents' trust?
6. Hasn't this idea of the master plan been kicked around for ages at this point? How can we believe that things are realistically happening at this time (given how long we've operated without such a seemingly vital plan....) (Krista Magnuson/JFK Elementary)
7. Why was Phase I [of this Master plan] not public? Where is the money coming from? How will this avoid becoming a public money grab? Will tech infrastructure be a part of this?

High School Pathways

1. Do you have outreach and other materials available in multiple languages?
2. Do you have a goal in terms of reaching parents in the city? How will you know when its been met? Will you collect demographic data on participants?

Budget

Federal and state dollars don't always get distributed to Boston (in regards to public K-12 education.) I've heard from both Boston State House Reps and Senators that when they advocate for funding to come to Boston, members from other parts of the state are resistant. The pervasive feeling is that Boston receives enough resources.

