

Minutes of the Citywide Parent Council (May 19, 2015, Bolling Building)

Attending, CPC Reps:

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)
Bruce Kiernan (Warren-Prescott)
Annis George (Perry)
Joel Thompson (BTU School)
Karen Shine (Eliot)
Karen Oil: (Mission Hill K-8)
Connie Forbes: (McKinley Elementary)
Kristin Johnson (Mendell)
Nancy Minucci (Perry)
Nicol Riley (Sumner)
Louisa Dowal: (Manning Elementary)
Beth Nolan: (BLA)
Krista Magnuson: (JFK Innovation Elementary)
Mary Lewis-Pierce: (BTU School)
Angela Gordon (English)
Liz Nofziger (Otis)
Harneen Chernow (Ohrenberger)
Latoya Gayle (Mason)
Deeqo Jibril (Nathan Hale)
Katie Muse-Fisher (Sumner)
Shari Perry-Wallace (O'Bryant)
Joanna Jenkins (Holmes)
Karen Oil/Mission Hill
Karen Zerby Buzzelle (Haley)
William Tabb (Channing)
Joanna Jenkins (Holmes)
Lauren Margharita (Philbrck/Bates)
Kelvin Brooks (West Roxbury Academy)
Shannon Parker (Roosevelt K-8)
Vannessa Martin (Orchard Gardens K-8)
Dina Cundiff (Trotter)

Attending, parents (non-CPC reps)

Kevin Murray (BLS)
Shanika Houlder (Condon)
Maura O'Toole (BLA)
Anita Cooper (JFK)

Attending, BPS: Michelle Brooks (Office of Engagement)
Monica Roberts (Office of Engagement)
Kim Rice (BPS Central, COO)

Special Guest: Dr. Tommy Chang, incoming Superintendent

- **Introductions**, approve (did not formally vote) last month's meeting minutes, warm up question (Sapna)

--We now represent 61 schools across the city; are creating a network of parents who are active and involved, and represent many other parents. Personal stories matter, but as they represent larger school communities

--Intros (name, school, neighborhood)

-- Warm up questions: (five parents to answer):

- 1) Why do you think the school is a good fit for your child? (art teacher, specials at school and smaller class sizes, Channing good fit, different schools that offer my child a chance to excel);
- 2) Why are you a good fit for BPS? (problem-solver, BPS teacher, BPS graduate, long time parent);

- **General Updates**

1) *Community Dialogues (Mary Pierce/BTU)*

--have been having meetings in different city council districts/ have been really great (McCarthy, O'Malley, Jackson-the most "cooperative" councilor)

--challenges have been getting parents to know about the meetings; next one in Dorchester/Murphy; if you are at a school in the district (Baker) get the word out

2) *Nutrition and Food (Ann Sousa/Quincy)*

--committee has met, discussing options

--would like to have a BPS central kitchen (used to)

--would like parents to be more involved in choosing vendors and food selection process

Comment: larger schools used to have their own kitchens/ maybe bring them into the discussion

3) *Budget Letter (Heshan and Kenny)*

--Letter came out of last meeting with Rahn Dorsey; Heshan is working on letter with Krista M. about the five main concerns identified at our last meeting

--at State House, amendments to increase education funding; emails of Senators included to ask about amendments; (charter school reimbursement; homeless student transportation)

--see emails from Heshan and Kenny about the amendments; also can go to State House for social media room;

--City Council meetings going on to determine final budget

4) *ELT (Kris Johnson (Mendell) –*

--The ELT Joint Task Force met on 5/12/15

--Partners interested in being considered for ELT roll-out submitted brief proposals to BPS. The JTF reviewed those proposals.

--There is a grant of ~\$150,000 that may be re-allocated to increase funding for partners willing to participate in ELT. The ELT JTF asked schools to identify existing partnerships and include a brief summary of how these are funded. The JTF is collecting enrollment data, along with the partnership data, and ranking the partnership needs of the schools in Cohort A. These funds will be distributed after the ELT JTF analyzes this data.

--There is a short list of restricted partnerships available to Cohort A Schools. These are for contracts already in place with BPS for a certain number of schools (some of these schools are closing and some schools are ending partnerships). Schools in Cohort A will be able to submit an RFP to apply for these open partnerships that will be funded centrally.

--The budget office is still considering the request of increased funding to schools to help pay for more specialists.

Email Kris for more information (krissycabbage@gmail.com)

Questions/comments on ELT:

- we need more specialists; not enough staff; need more bodies in the building;
- follow up from other parents; every school is facing this;
- worry that pool of money is serving fewer group of kids
- is the ELT task force looking at schools (Irving) that are losing ELT?

Kris reply: there is awareness of the funding issues, ELT Task Force looking at this; also looking at schools that are losing ELT;

- **Comments from Dr. Chang**

--Thank you: Heshan (for being on the transition team, work with CPC); key parent leaders who have shared questions and comments (in person and on social media); Michelle Brooks and Monica Roberts (who will be new Asst. Super of Engagement)

Opening/general remarks:

- Boston; (drinking water, traffic and parking; strong views and opinions; Red Sox and “Brady was framed”
- Transition: rare for a superintendent to have an “on ramp;” most superintendents take over and are trying to learn the system on day one; great to have 2 ½ month period to figure out and listen and learn; What have we done?
 - 1) Started from an equity lens; and personal stories
 - 2) Frameworks for how we drive change; “adult learning”
 - 3) By end will have a 100 day plan; everything is transparent; listen and learn tour;
- What do I bring to Boston?
 - 1) Boston has done some cutting edge stuff, but I want to do better and bring some things to the table
 - 2) *I bring my story;*
 - first grade and PE teacher who told him to take off jacket/not understanding English; teacher who helped me is the one who is why I am in BPS; no child deserves treatment like that; the teacher gave me social/emotional support, made me leader, also reading and writing;
 - after graduation from U Penn went to TFA; focus on being a teacher (v. going to medical school);
 - principal and founder of charter school-learned “autonomy 2;” autonomy does not exempt us from belonging to the wider community
 - then to LAUSD; transformation schools (pilot schools, mainly high schools); saw graduation rates go up;
 - 6 months ago put my hat in the ring for Boston; interview process was “really public” but inspired to see such engagement and comment a school committee and Mayor who would support such a process; longest contract in the country (5 years); needed to transform;

3) *What do I think Boston needs to work on?*

--*achievement gaps*; black and brown boys; graduation rates

--*autonomy*; need to actualize and give supports not just give autonomy: example; not fair to schools to say have assessment autonomy without support; issues associated with hiring autonomy; with autonomy comes accountability (need to commit to metrics, all kinds of schools, charters, etc.)

--*innovation*; much of dialogue happens around innovation around governance rather than how learning should look like; Boston is on the right track in thinking about high school redesign (learning and teaching can happen in many avenues, leveraging technology, looking at marketplace for jobs (health care and technology); need for job training, mentorship, etc.

--*high quality choice in every neighborhood*; I am learning about the history of this in the city; need to have conversation about equity if parents share personally experiences about why system is not working and what is actually in our schools; what is a quality school? Might mean different things to different parents;

Q and A with Dr. Chang and CPC:

Topics:

1) School assignment: Parent Questions and comments

- Could you speak to our new assignment plan (close to home) and the way certain neighborhoods have been closed off from high-quality schools? (and follow up/choices are restricted; fewer schools; kids of color being cheated out of a quality education;
- In East Boston, families have less choice than Charlestown
- Assignment plan; hurts students that aren't in school and are; we can't get funding (Perry) part of our assignment zone is water; why can't we get students from further away?
- Equity about buses?
- Also issues with assignment around ELL schools; have to go in opposite direction of work to get quality school for ELL students

Reply: (Dr. Chang) I am trying to figure that out; asking information; how many kids are from one mile; further, and what is the capacity of that school? Mayor's office master plan; changes have to happen through a process; data has to be transparent;

--(Kim Rice elaborates); We have provided some information; East Boston priority is special, related to Garrity order;

2) SPED services; Parent Questions, comments

- Is there going to be increased support for parents around ELL and SPED? (translators)
- What about transparency for parents and information?
- What about the transition/aging out piece for SPED students? Need to talk about graduation rates for SWD? What are the vocational training (for example pharmacy tech) where SWD can have opportunities to excel?
- Why is that the specialized population has to organize and fight for things our children need;
- The structure isn't there in BPS for students with disabilities to figure out what is the best option for students for post-graduation
- Because it is an inclusive school, doesn't mean students get services;
- How can we connect teachers (right now it goes principal to principal when a student transfers)?
- Itinerants coming

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes to all four questions. Themes I have heard from parents are about: assessments; transition post high school; need for more inclusive options; IEP process (don't get IEP report and assessment); I have brought Carla Estrada on board, and she will spend her time doing ELL work, SPED, social-emotional work;

Dual language schools? ; Parent Questions, comments

- 3) Assessments not being done in Spanish and English so what supports can there? Need to be to looking into that.

A, Dr. Chang: What assessments are we looking at? Need to understand better; commitment to ELL

4) Bullying/School Climate; Parent Questions, comments

- How can we provide advocacy supports? Example; took me to get support from a city councilor and three administrators from my kid who was being bullied; a parent who moved out of the city because her son was being bullied;
- Parents tell principal but not replied to? Need to help other kids and speak up for them too.
- Budget issues: funding for school bus monitors, anti-bullying programs;
- Need for psychologists and psychological assistance in our schools; need to help kids (including bullies, who come from difficult environments)

Reply, Dr. Chang: Getting a sense that it would be good for parents to come together in restorative circles; parents should not be getting a response from a school, but at the same time, parents need to talk to each other;

Parent response to: don't put the blame back on the parents; walk around some of the schools and see what is happening;

5) Testing: Parent Questions, comments

- So much testing ; how can you keep a child in school is all you are doing is getting tested?
- Issue of schools in turnaround being at risk of being closed; should have more time to turn around; when schools close students get new teachers and loss of continuity;
- Happens even in kindergarten; too much testing

A, Dr. Chang: Hoping to move to move to different kind of assessment; NCLB has been important but time to move to different ways to assess

6) Middle Schools: Parent Questions, comments

- In East Boston, there aren't any middle schools; have seen focus on early childhood and high school, but what about middle schools?
- Even in K-8 schools, have empty seats in middle schools but clamoring to get into K1/"huge void"/dropoff in kids
- Impact of exam schools and half middle school leaves

A, Dr. Chang: Can't speak specifically to East Boston, but middle schools have been left behind; would like to check in with group about this;

Conclusion: (Dr. Chang)

- I want to be a partner; contact me (tchang@bostonpublicschools.org) and reference CPC meeting, Tuesday night; heard the passion. My takeaways:
 - 1) We need to do homework around SPED.
 - 2) Issues with feeder patterns and programs and how do they make sense (not just work of the BPS; Mayor's office going to be driving this process but need BPS parents).
 - 3) Frustration parents have about lack of quick real time immediate services (not just bullying); not getting a response that as a parent you deserve.

Wrap-Up: (Sapna): What worked? Give a number 1-10 for the meeting (most say 8): Why? Because of Dr. Chang; great listening; great facilitation; could be improved by scheduling a longer meeting when have a visitor.

Next CPC meeting: (at Bolling Building) 6- 8 pm, June 16