CPC Special Meeting with Tommy Chang and cabinet (Sept. 1, 2015, 6-7:30, Bolling)

Present: Attending, CPC Representatives:
- Mary Battenfeld: (BLA, Secretary/Minutes)
- Sapna Padte: (Facilitator, Lyndon K-8)
- Heshan Berents-Weeramuni (Co-chair, Curley)
- Angelina Camacho (co-chair, Hernandez)
- Kenny Jervis (co-chair, Roger Clapp)
- Barbara Rosa: (co-chair, Hale/Snowden)
- Debra Brendemuehl (Lyndon)
- Kelvin Brooks (WRA)
- Harneen Chernow (Beethoven-Ohrenberger)
- Teofilo Colombo (East Boston High)
- Dina Cundiff (Trotter)
- Androfils Dorsanivil (Higginson-Lewis)
- Maria Edsale-Farrell: (Roosevelt, O'Bryant)
- Linda Freeman (Boston Green Academy/CASH)
- Connie Forbes: (McKinley Elementary)
- Latoya Gayle (Mason)
- Annisa George (Perry)
- Marc Goldstein (Winship)
- Joanna Jenkins (Holmes)
- Kristen Johnson (Mendell)
- Naeemah Kennedy (Mason)
- Mary Lewis-Pierce: (BTU School)
- Carolyn Lomax: (Holmes Elementary, O'Bryant)
- Krista Magnuson: (JFK Innovation Elementary)
- Mariel Martinez (King)
- Natasha Maughan (Ellis)
- Nancy Minucci (Perry)
- Katie Muse-Fisher (Sumner)
- Beth Nolan: (BLA)
- Nicole O’Brien (Condon)
- Shannon Parker (Roosevelt)
- Nicol Riley (Sumner)
- Maria Rogers (BLS, Henderson)
- Vasnyy Torres (Brighton High)
- Gloria West (BCLA/Young Achievers)
- Monica Wheeler (Kilmer)
- Liza Marie White (Ellison/Rosa Parks)

Invited guests:
- Tommy Chang, Superintendent
- Rahn Dorsey, Mayor’s Office
- Karla Estrada, Dept. Super of Student Support
- Carolyn MacNeil, ombudsperson
- Makeeba McCreary, Chief of Staff
- Donna Muncy, Dept. Super of Strategy
- Kim Rice, Asst. Super of Operations
- Monica Roberts, Engagement
- Doannie Tran, Asst. Super of Professional Learning
- Ross Wilson, Managing Partner, Innovation

Other visitors:
- Mossik Hacobian, Higher Ground, Julia Mejia, Codman Academy,
And thanks to Kristen Johnson, we are live on Periscope!

Intro: Heshan:

Dr. Chang: (meeting follows his/BPS agenda)
1) Intro, welcome;
   --Thank you for coming out;
   --If we want to be authentic partners we want to be sure parent leaders are informed;
   --Introductions of BPS education cabinet: including new ombudsperson, Carolyn MacNeill

2) Handouts/General information: In keeping with informing parent leaders, CPC members given a folder with:
   • Organizational chart
   • Sample menus
   • Transportation waivers (opt in and opt out) and other materials, including coloring book
   • ?? etc.

Please post or let parents at your school know this information. Links to material when available are included.

3) Improving communication with families (Kim Rice);
   --have built in functionality with parent portal (SIS); but some schools haven’t been active; offering trainings for school leaders;
   --school bus app
   --introduce Carolyn MacNeill; ombudsperson (came from Boston Police Dept., been here about 6 weeks)
Carolyn M.: I see role my as advocacy; helping parents with lots of different issues; role that has been unfilled for almost 3 years; important that parents have someone to answer questions; try to be very responsive; all about collaboration and relationship building;

Heshan: can you give:
   --phone and email; Answer: cell phone; 857-891-1363; cmacneill@bostonpublicschools.org
   --issues you have been most asked about: Answer: wait lists and assignments? issue of district setting reasonable expectations;

4) Food services; (Kim Rice)
   --healthier menus (included in packet are sample menus)
   --we now have a food advisory committee (Heshan notes is subcommittee of CPC; Ann Sousa)
   --chef program at Fenway High to create meals and pilot;
   --water (ours is best in country!) looking at hybrid fountains where you get water bottle function too; not eliminating bottled water until we get
   --are doing national search for director or food services

QUESTIONS about food services:
   --will there be CPC reps on that search committee? Answer: YES
   -- are working with Councilor O'Malley? A: yes we are
   -- how about vending machines? Answer: are looking at that;
   -- putting together plan to work on bubblers? A: part of capital plan
   --restrictions on using kitchens? could that change? Answer: that’s a bigger question; part of facilities master plan; if used for food prep can’t have other uses; varies by school
   -- how is BPS monitoring food quality (milk spoiled, etc.) and making sure things are right from the start; Answer: will defer question to food service coordinator; Deb Ventrecelli
5) Transportation: (Kim)
-- got info out earlier than usual; families may get more than one letter;
-- alternative transportation; issues and seeking to address
-- new fleet of buses; propane replaced all the diesel ones with wheel chair lifts so there is no exhaust;
-- MBTA services; we are offering family rides
-- 6th graders; not on buses; was miscommunication at the Dearborn meeting.

Questions about Transportation:
? How is it that some schools went to 6th grade without asking families? Answer: there are only 3 schools, and school agreed;

? How about money and not affording it? Answer: no change in policy; still distance limits on who can get a pass;

? Danger of traveling to and from home; students have to miss out on after school activities because they don’t have safe means of transportation; Answer: we are not reinstating late buses; decision has been made

? Changes in eligibility for transportation; distance has changed in terms who is eligible; Answer: technology has advanced so now we use GIS; that made some families not eligible; Carolyn response/follow up: families take safest and not shortest route; should count alternative routes/shootings and danger; is a significant difference in the eligibility; Kim; I can sit down with you specifically if there is some calculation that is off;

? Parents have asked to be on transportation subcommittee (would love to have parents on it and fold into names) Answer: (Rahn): Mayor’s transportation task force asked to look at implementation for middle school students; but there are a number of outstanding recommendations; one is to reconstitute group; get data; parental input; Follow up question: timetable? Rahn: ASAP; will work to identify key players;

?: how many schools with 6th graders are opting in: (Kim/Answer: Orchard Gardens, Jackson Mann and ?); follow up: how was it decided? should be SSC; shouldn’t be just administrators assigned;

?: opted out but have received bus assignments; Kim/Answer: aggressively going after RSVPs; is a strategy that we make sure we take families who opt out off the bus; looking at our citywide schools; looking for efficiency; still in zone plan as well as home based; new east/west transport; running dual transportation systems/grandfathering;

?: sexual harassment is not being taken seriously; head of MBTA police quoted as saying he hadn’t heard of that; Kim/Answer: I take that near and dear; have a woman on staff focused on middle schools females and as walkers; Councilor Pressley is active; want to expand survey and get authentic experiences; came up as issue that underreported;

?: issue of MBTA passes locking; kids arrested because passes didn’t work; Kim/Answer: functionality in the system; are addressing that schools charge replacement fees;

Tommy Chang (replies to several issues):
-- give a shout out to Kim; food services, transportation, assignment, shares and knows a lot of information; also knows there is a lot of change management that needs to happen;
-- facilities master plan; super critical to look at governance structure of the facility master plan
-- waitlist; want to be super clear; most are students who stay on a wait list v. unassigned; going to be a massive effort for more funding for K0 and K1;
--two things will keep me up at night; 1) temperature (heat and cold later); 2) buses; bus drivers have their routes; in negotiation; optimistic will come to resolution;
--“culture of we;” about all kids; we are committed to every single student achieving at a high level; working with any parent; hold us accountable if we aren’t doing that; work in progress but we are moving in right direction;
--share a “not so bright spot; angry/inappropriate note from parent leaders at a school; there are people who are representing themselves as parent leaders who are not acting in that way; will respect this group (CPC) as parent leaders

?: high school students being charged to replace M7 cards; called 15 schools; highest charging $45; lowest $10; schools should set a policy and communicate to parents;

TC: can we broaden conversation about safety;

?: comment/suggestion; a lot of things parents are fighting for are the same; how can we work with parent engagement around solution focus? groups of student who walk together; bikes? how to promote unity and work together so that all of kids are getting to school safely; Answer: (Rahn): Safe routes to schools grant; group has done organizing in Chelsea and Revere; hope we can organize parents to do that;

?: how much information (including about transportation) is going into the hands of parents? (orientation? how do we use it better) 

? transportation: is it possible to know the stop before and after your stop? parents know better; Answer (Ross) Will take your information and will get it

TC: if no legal problem should give the route;

?: master plan? problems with receiving services; IEPS and not getting services;

Carolyn MacNeill: want to take those individual questions; v. Kim systemic ones;

TC: have to leave; I will be involved; I will be engaged;

6) General Q & A
Sapna: Overview: think about big picture issues; role of CPC way to take issues around the city; new reps/elections should be coming up;

?: is there a way to look at bus assignments for K-8; is there a way to filter in who is opting out and giving seats to older kids; Answer: (Donna M): home based in work in process; Rahn: do not know the status of the equity analysis; has been mandated and is being worked on;

?: start times are out of whack (Perry, 9:30 ); and early morning start times for high schools; Another parent echoed that in a different way (Trotter given 7:30-3 weeks before school started; switched over from 9 am);

?: is there a projected time for the safe school walk? son has to walk through gang; what are the safe zones? has to be more systematic; Answer Rahn: I will take responsibility for getting it going; will coordinate to work with;

?: Lyndon organized and called Safe Routes to Schools; parents laid out the plan; they helped directly if as parents you want to organize;

?: how can we help to empower parents? Are empowered because you know safe routes to schools;
Comment: CPC has plans to make sure schools were educated and know what roles are; versus when BPS people are trained and sent to school different because that person is paid by BPS;

?: financial situation? waste and redundant purchasing? schools are throwing away things and schools are throwing away?

?: what is the projected savings? ($9.5 million); I am fortunate enough have peer leaders who work at my school; money should go towards putting extra bodies (police officers) around neighborhoods for safe travels; think about trauma and education; Response: Carolyn MacNeill: street workers from 4-midnight; police dept. should have officers there; Rahn: savings haven't happened yet; might have to put the savings elsewhere;

?: would like to understand the chart and how is happening; what is the feedback loop?

?: what about the transportation? MBTA police? at what point is everyone going to come together; Kim coordinates calls with agencies?

Rahn: meeting; high school headmasters are meeting with school police; would suggest;

?: where is the way parents can have impact on systemic change v. responding to individual complaints? For example, parents are saying don't want middle schoolers on buses yet is happening; Answer Rahn: some parents opting in; and we are going to have a meeting with parents and BPD; also we have waiver forms; can still waiver out;

?: need to make a systematic change in a system that is very different depending on where you are act;

?: East Boston; lost yellow buses from Maverick to Eastie; since then have had increased in tardiness; have to walk; delays in T, etc.

?: can you have meetings to talk about transportation and middle school to high schools;

7) Wrap up: (Sapna): rate meeting? 7-8; thanks to BPS for coming out; and see what CPC has accomplished;