

**Citywide Parent Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting with Superintendent Cassellius**  
**11/05/19**

1. Introductions from each rep and person present
2. Superintendent (BC) opened the meeting explaining that her Strategic Plan will align with the goals and mission of the Office of Equity. Mentioned she may not have all the answers because her team is still conducting tours and gathering information and feedback.

3. Q and A

Deb - Shaw

Vision or philosophy. What does BC see as a fully resourced school and what does she think every school/student should have?

BC: Take inventory of what's out there and then make sure funding goes out equitably. Basic foundations should include art, PE, a nurse, access to a library, outdoor play spaces, good food/cafeteria, possibly a social worker. Mentioned that we should think more creatively about sharing resources, teachers, staff between neighboring schools

Neta - Guild

Main concern is with facilities. How do we get a maintenance budget and personnel? Examples, hot pipes that need to be covered for safety reasons. Is there a short-term plan for maintenance?

BC: When she came to Boston, was shocked to see some of our buildings. Agrees that the deferred maintenance is a problem. Allocated some additional staff and evening facilities crew, implemented monthly awards for custodians. Asked them what it would take to properly maintain our schools and they gave her a budget, which will be considered along with all the other items to consider. Must have clean and maintained schools before we can create new spaces

Peter - Brighton High

Did BC see the article in the Globe comparing Newton South with Brighton High, and if so, what did she think?

BC: Thinks Brighton High has lots of potential for arts, and she has met the football team. Thinks programs and opportunities should be the same across schools. She said here will be a high school redesign plan

JQLS Rep

Wanted to know if Josiah Quincy School will get some of its badly needed repairs soon?

BC: Monica Roberts will find out if they are on the short-term list

East Boston Early Learning Center Rep  
(Missed the question)

BC: Has heard concerns from East Boston schools around culture and language programming, transportation, and other issues. Her team is assessing the unique needs of East Boston

Lisa Green - BLS: asked about disparities in the district. How do we address disparities and what does she think about private fundraising?

BC: Resource equity is a concern she hears a lot. Need to look at grants. contracts that go out  
Thinks individual schools should be able to privately fundraise but asked how can we allocate resources to schools that aren't able to fundraise? Referred back to the foundational budget concept where every school should have a base budget and offerings

Nicol Riley - Sumner

Is the expectation that parents will fundraise to replace school Chromebooks when they are no longer functional?

BC: There will be a budget for technology in the future that allows for the updating of Chromebooks

Ann Malone - BLS

Liked that BC is viewing everything through an equity lens. What is your vision for moving the equity lens from micro to macro? What does she mean by wrap-around services?

BC: This will be a comprehensive package that we need to deliver. Special Ed - a lot of work needs to be done here. Need to understand how we do sub-separate, autism strands and how we work with families. Plans to hire a specialist to help BPS decide how to deliver Special Ed services. Need expectations around how resources are allocated.

Wrap sound services definition - what resources exist in a school to support social emotional health and family and community supports. How do we leverage outside partners to fill the gaps in our schools? BC referred to the Gardner Pilot "spoke and wheel" model that partners with many outside agencies to provide services such as dental and mental health services.  
Standardized testing: eliminated several standardized tests that were redundant or being repeated from previous years or were being given at the end of the year.

Restorative justice - BPS has a good one but needs more capacity and training. BC plans to make this happen.

Erin - Channing

School choice is stressful and convoluted. Asked what BC thinks about our system?

BC: Would like to make the closest school the best choice for families. Also thinks that charter, private and parochial schools play a role. Specialized school options will continue to exist. Says she is still grappling with the assignment system but hears loud and clear that it's not easy for parents to navigate. When we give a school a summative rating, we do it a disservice. Would like every school to have a virtual tour available for prospective families to view online, like a YouTube channel. She said, "We need to start telling our story better."

Jen - Hale

Concerned that students are getting a lot of worksheets that “don’t spark joyful learning.”  
BC: Every school should be creating meaningful work for children, project and instructional based learning, and integrating technology into the classroom. Because there is so much autonomy schools can choose how they deliver instruction. They are developing frameworks at Central Office to roll out to schools. Also agrees that standardized tests need to be used sparingly

Beliza - Murphy

Mental health. How do we get services into every school for every income level?

BC: My goal is to have mental health services available for every student who needs them. Again mentioned hub model where community partners deliver services in schools. Also likes some of the mindfulness, yoga and sensory rooms that schools can provide. Concerned that many young children feel pain and trauma that must be addressed

Beliza also asked how BC feels about schools that won’t let parents in the building for drop off?

BC: Will look into that

Mendell Rep

Asked about expanding 6th grades at the K-5 schools who don’t have one?

BC: Rolled out this year, more planned for next year. Have heard loud and clear that parents want this and she needs to find out from the city how we can make this happen. We should hear about more additional schools getting a 6th grade by January 2020

Jill - Condon

Very happy with her child’s school and education until this year. Teacher this year seems to be ineffective and her child is languishing. What can be done?

BC: Lean on your school leadership team in this case. If escalated, the district can get the teacher the support they need

Julie - Curley

Asked for BC’s thoughts on the closing of West Roxbury Academy.

BC: A very hard decision for any Superintendent. When BC has to make hard decisions, she feels it’s important to genuinely engage the parents, students and community. If she can’t, she hopes to make the right and best decisions

Ashley - Eliot

How do you see CPC and what do you think our role can be in working with you?

BC: Important to have representation from a larger group and looks forward to working and meeting regularly with CPC and other parent and community organizations

Lauren - BLA

Asked if BC was familiar with the McCormack Middle School closing history, and now the issue with their outdoor space being transferred to the Boys and Girls Club?

BC: Doesn't yet know how she will handle this issue. Paused the Build BPS process and plans to make sure proper engagement is done around school upgrades etc. going forward

Co-chair Gloria West then asked questions from parents who could not be present.

How is BPS working with colleges in the community?

BC: Part of the High School redesign will include a lot more partnerships, as well as unions, community colleges and other partners for early college and concurrent enrollment

In the past 5 years BPS has lost a lot of teachers of color. Is there a process in place to recruit teachers of color back to BPS?

BC: Need to do 3 things (1) Hire a New chief of Human Capital (2) Build capacity (3) Train principals and investigate early hiring and replacement of teachers of color. She is closely monitoring hiring and how we implement some of these strategies

Gloria - Young Achievers

Could you share more information about the High School Redesign?

BC: Redesign should include early college options, career pathways, partnering with unions and businesses. She has some ideas for a partnership between Roxbury Community College and Madison High. Also looking at how we program, looking at Mass Core, and looking at how we educate 11th and 12th graders - should they have a college-like schedule that involves service projects, job shadowing, apprenticeships, working part of the day? Can they take their general college classes before they leave high school so they can condense college into 2 years? Many ideas!

What does JUICE stand for?

Joy, Unity, Inclusion, Collaboration, Equity

JUICE came about as she listened to what was working, and then picked 3 core values to bring with her into the district. Decided on Inclusion, Collaboration and Equity. After she started in BPS, she noticed that Central Office needed more Joy. And then the BLS Headmaster suggested adding U for Unity.

Neathery - Mission Hill

Terra Nova. If you're not offering Terra Nova, how will students opt into free BLS test prep class over summer?

BC: Wasn't familiar enough with the program to respond

Blanca - Alighieri

Loves the Montessori school her child attends and thinks it's an amazing model. Does BC see any room for expansion?

BC: Agrees Alighieri is a wonderful school and wants to expand the Montessori model in BPS. The Alighieri building is too small but it could perhaps expand to be a lower and upper campus

Cristal - Mattahunt

Mattahunt is a lovely new school attached to a community center. Wants to know if there are plans to add resources to the school, e.g. They have a library but no books

BC: I missed her response

Comment

A parent commented that their kids have been in 8 schools. One is unsure where he's going next

BC: Also missed this response

William - Channing

Candy fundraiser was banned for health reasons, but it was the most popular. Can they get it back?

BC: Hasn't heard this issue so far. Ann Malone explained candy fundraisers don't comply with the BPS Health and Wellness policy

Gloria – Young Achievers

Will BC commit to meeting with CPC 4 times a year?

BC: Yes!

Gloria also mentioned that some schools do a great job of recruiting, but CPC could use some help with this. BC says Engagement will help in any way they can

Julie - Curley

What is BC's vision for working with a representative parent body?

BC: An advisory board of parents and community members might be a model that could be utilized. Parents could present ideas to this board that they could take back to their schools

Sam - Hernandez

Is there a push to expand the dual language model?

BC: Values dual language programs and wants to expand them, along with Montessori and other kinds of specialty schools. Needs to be done carefully so there aren't declining enrollment issues in other schools

East Boston parent

Hard to get to this location for meetings

BC: Has heard from many East Boston parents that this is an issue