

April 27, 2021 meeting of the Citywide Parent Council
(Zoom)

At 6:09, 24 participants. At 7:09, 37 participants

6:12: Discussion -- your experience so far with COVID

- Generally positive
- Some parents were required to choose between coming to school OR keeping the same teacher, which is a tough choice.
- Lots of changes with staffing of various classes (e.g. one teacher is teaching remote, one is teaching in-person)
- From community perspective, parents felt hectic, weather is a concern.

6:20 Announcements

- Nathalie (BPS Engagement) --
 - BPS is in the process of bringing people together to decide on how the Relief Fund money -- \$400 million -- will be spent. Nicol Riley will be representing CPC. Nicol committed to parent council publicizing the meetings of the Relief Funds meetings, seeking parent feedback.
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 - Nathalie also asked for parent volunteers to participate in various working groups. Lori Greenwood is recruiting parents.
 - Nathalie also promoted Family Engagement Events on BPS website Engagements page
- Ashley Mahanama --
 - CPC splitting to an official CPC mailing list AND
 - Separate parent discussion email list

MCAS Q&A with Corey Harris

- MCAS is the federally mandated accountability exams, used as a graduation requirement, and as a school measurement and reporting tool.
- Mass. does not have a formal process for parents opting out of MCAS. The state requires the district to get a 95% participation rate.
- MCAS has been waived for this year's Juniors.
- We are hopeful that the same policy will be adopted for this year's Sophomores. We don't expect DESE to take a position on that soon.

My children are remote for the rest of the year, will they be taking the MCAS at home (i will not be bringing them into school just for testing)?

- 3-8 students will have a remote testing option. High school students will be required to test in person. If 10th graders miss the MCAS this year, there will be future opportunities to take the exam.
- High school students will not be required to come to school to take the MCAS.

- Accommodations will be provided as usual.

What will their [remote] school day look like while their peers are taking the test in person (it will take in person kids longer). Will MCAS days be asynchronous days for remote learners?

- No decision has been made. (Some schools @ 90% in-person, others @ 40% in-person). So there will probably be flexibility. Probably some asynchronous learning for remote students.

What are BPS' expectations of data accuracy in home administration?

- Waiting to hear from DESE. We believe the results are going to be difficult to make meaning of regardless of home versus school administration.

What are BPS' plans for resolving testing technological difficulties while hybrid schooling?

- This will lead to lots of different challenges we haven't faced before. We are recommending that schools set up a hotline.

What are BPS' plans regarding students who are logistically incapable of completing the MCAS on assigned dates?

- No direct impact for missing the exam, especially for lower grades. For older students, there are impacts, but we are hoping DESE will modify the requirements.

How is the MCAS expected to be helpful to students, teachers, or the district during disrupted schooling? Specific answers for each of these three groups expected.

- The best use is diagnosis at schools or district-wide to identify standards that need help, where we can direct resources. We could also use it as a census of what has happened to kids over time (e.g. if they don't take the test in a later year).
- Every school is required to give interim assessments at least twice a year. We will be using that data. And 53% of schools use MAP (Measure of Academic Progress). MAP is good because it measures growth, not proficiency.

How exactly is BPS liaising with the state and the testing company on the MCAS process development

What should parents use to evaluate schools?

- Qualitative (surveys, word-of-mouth) and quantitative data. Staff diversity. Stable leadership.
- It's hard to pinpoint practices in certain schools that are getting good results. It gets even more difficult in high school because of the sorting of students.

Opting out of the MCAS.

- The District won't take a position to tell parents to opt out. But we will not require any student to sit and take the MCAS. We will respect whatever choice the families make.

- There is no financial hit to schools whether or not they take the hit.
- There is no district conversation about how schools accommodate opting out students. It would be helpful to give the school leader a heads up.

Committee Reports

Report on City Council Hearing on Summer Learning (Suleika Soto)

Video Project (Steve Lewis)

The first thing: a statement of who CPC is -- as many different languages, faces, parts of the city as possible. 15 minutes to get involved! Steve will show up and meet you at your school, and then we will piece it all together.

In the future: an orientation video

In the future: a budget process video

Joint Steering Committee Report (Nicol Riley)

> met, set dates, updating the BPS website

> due to the pandemic, district working on cleaning up the list. Meeting in May, in June.

AWC/EFA working group (Prince Charles Alexander)

> 3 meetings, fourth meeting Thursday.

> Working our way through a process to weigh information and come up with ideas and proposals. We are starting to look at ideas and proposals.

Exam School Task Force (Sarah Henderson)

> looking at research and examples around the country

> students are speaking up to be a larger part of the conversation; setting up a meeting specifically for students

> it would be great to get more diverse parent representation

Equitable Grading Return Recover Reimagine Task force (Anna White)

> They are striving to create a purpose for grades, and to build consistency between schools.

> Noting that changes to exam school admission will elevate the importance of consistency

> Next meeting: biases in grading.