



San Francisco Board of Education  
**Parent Advisory Council**

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the PAC**

August 30, 2011

**I. Attendance**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carolyn Alexander, Scott Falcone, Nancy Gapasin Gnass, Beatriz Gudino, RhoyalBaibé Foston, Miranda Martin, Gloria Molt, Georgia Williams-Bratt, Yue Tan, Patsy Tito

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chablis Scott, Maria García, Buthienah Taha

ALSO PRESENT: Ruth Grabowski, PAC Staff; Richard Carranza SFUSD; Carla Cuevas and Ray Lai, Interpreters; Ivy Chan, transcriber.

**II. Call to Order/Roll Call**

PAC Chair Nancy Gapasin Gnass called the meeting to order at 6:15pm.

The meeting began with introductions; we went around the room, and each person shared their name, the ages of their kids, the schools their children attend, and a hobby or interest they have.

**III. SFUSD's Strategic Priorities**

Deputy Superintendent Richard Carranza gave a brief update on some district issues, and was able to answer a few questions before he had to leave.

- \$11 million in federal “EduJobs” funding the district received last year was saved for this year, and is our safety net to avoid layoffs and expanded class size if the state of California doesn’t meet the projected revenue in December (which would trigger additional cuts to the education budget).
- The district is moving ahead to adopt the “Common Core” teaching strategy, which will be in place for all of CA by 2015; we’ve applied for a \$3 million grant to start implementing this now in San Francisco. This is a strategy that focuses deeply on key concepts. The district is starting with a focus on math, specifically.

Questions:

Since the target area is focused on math, what about the children who are not proficient in reading, since literacy skills is needed to do math?

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- One problem is that SFUSD has never had a district-wide approach to anything. We're still doing the work around language arts. With math being the Common Core course, every school, teacher, child will participate. This is to look deeper and see how children are learning math. For example, instead of a teacher teaching trying to cover 15 different math lessons, they will focus on 7 core lessons and make sure they master it.

We should put children together who balance each other. Buddy up one who is proficient in math and another in English. If some of the students excel in math, will we be using those students to help the children in the class that aren't?

- Some schools do look at students who are advanced in certain subjects and "buddying" them up with other students, as mentors.

Will we continue to use the Everyday Math curriculum? I heard recently that a new curriculum was adapted at the SIG schools.

- Everyday Math is the textbook for math. What some of the SIG schools have adopted is a program called SWUN math. It uses supplementary materials to teach math. It's a process by which teachers teach math, a way to get all the teachers on the same page about how they teach fractions, integers, etc. SWUN is a process on how they teach that everyone uses so that it's common. This way all the kids in that school are approaching it in the same way. SWUN also has a way to assess students to see if they're learning the material. Paul Revere is a school that adopted SWUN math and they improved by almost 2x.

What will the process be to assess the children and see which ones are falling behind?

- The Common Core is three years away but we're starting early to have a process of assessments through the school year. Last year it was called Measurement of Academic Process (MAP), but we were told that name is trademarked and we couldn't use it. So these are now called Common Learning Assessments (CLA). Teachers will conduct the CLA four times a year to assess the children. We're making sure the assessments are aligned with the seven standards for the Common Core.

How do the STAR tests figure into the Common Core?

- STAR measures how students do in mastering the standards. As we transition to the Common Core the standards are going to be different. The STAR tests will start to look different after three years.

A teacher will never be evaluated on MAP data; it is to assess the children. We focused on seeing if MAP data can predict how the CST's will end up.

What are the district's 13 initiatives?

- Superintendent's Zone/School Improvement Grant (SIG), College and Career Readiness, Core Curriculum and Common Learning Assessments, Special Education Redesign, Early Learning, English Learners/Lau Plan, Restorative Practices, Middle School Feeder Patterns, Area Teams, Human Capital, Parent Engagement, Partnerships and Resource Development, and Central Office Accountability/Performance Management

How can you get the children to be ready to graduate? How do you get them engaged in school?

- Kids won't care what you teach them if they don't know you care. So if there's someone at school who cares about you, then you'll be more involved in school. We're also providing more ways for children to get their education, such as online schooling.

Parent: There has to be mechanisms in the school for when a child isn't doing well or a child isn't attending school.

Studying or going to school online isn't going to work for children who are already struggling with the current standard. Truancy happens because kids don't want to go to school and teachers don't have time to follow-up.

- Refers back to teachers caring and the Restorative Practice programs in schools. Kids using technology is second nature; they wouldn't have problems going online for classes.

Deputy Superintendent Carranza intends to come to another PAC to continue this discussion. The Board of Education members are going on retreat in September, and will narrow the long list of initiatives to a few focused priorities. We hope to have an update on this by our next PAC meeting.

#### **IV. Review PAC Meeting Guidelines**

Nancy reviewed the handout for PAC meeting norms. She asked people to try to arrive on time so we can get through everything and leave by 8:30pm, and noted that we need to have a quorum of half of the PAC membership present before we can vote.

Ruth added that it's good to reach agreement on issues, but it's also important that everyone feels free to say what they think - especially if it's different from the trend of a conversation. It's important to hear different perspectives and it's ok to disagree, although we strive to find common ground.

Rhoyal said he feels many things the PAC does are repetitive, we say the same things and it doesn't seem like anything changes, so are we actually going to take a different kind of action?

Nancy provided some context to this concern. Last year we did the whole series of forums about middle school feeders; the PAC was against this and had come up with alternative recommendations. It was frustrating for PAC to put all this work into it and the school board and superintendent just passed by what we presented, they didn't do anything about it. This can be frustrating. It is the duty of PAC to keep at them to get the parents' words across.

## **V. Gallery Walk: Current Conditions in the SFUSD & the History of the PAC**

PAC members reviewed data about the district and the PAC's work, which was on charts displayed in the hallway. This included information about the SFUSD student population, student achievement on the California Standards Tests over the past few years, and the PAC's goals and achievements over the past several years, including reports of Findings and Recommendations from community conversations about student assignment and access to afterschool programs.

## **VI. Reflections on Student Data, District Initiatives & the PAC's Role**

PAC members shared their thoughts, questions and concerns about the information in the Gallery Walk:

- I noticed that of the six things PAC has worked on over the years, four of them were in direct response to what the Board is doing. There are probably a lot of things PAC wants to do but it has to be shelved due to what is happening at that moment. What Richard Carranza said about algebra doesn't make much sense to me. If you're not ready in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade, you won't be ready in 8<sup>th</sup>. The proficiency in algebra dropped at Everett; is this related to the focus on algebra at younger grade levels? And what about O'Connell, why is their language arts so much higher than their math; are they diverting from other subjects to focus on language arts? I've noticed that the district's API has increased every year from 2008 - 2009; I don't believe that it's because of the district the API raised but something else is going on.
- I looked at the learning disabilities, I noticed that African American and Latinos were high which was concerning. It was surprising to see Latinos and Chinese were almost the same.
- I have to say that what gets included in this "gallery walk" is usually skewed by what I'm paying special attention to - for example, algebra is something I've been focused on for the past three years. Over the last few years the numbers of children passing algebra has not risen much - across the district barely 50% are at basic or better for algebra. This is a big issue because it's a gatekeeper course - and it's part of the graduation requirements - so how are these kids going to be able to graduate?
- The CLA assessments Richard Carranza was talking about - are they used in middle and high schools too? How much time are they spending to run this assessment? (Ruth will ask Richard Carranza about this.)
- The dropout rate of Pacific Islanders is high. We are talking about implementing all these new changes in curriculums, but what's the point if the kids are dropping out of school? Pacific Islanders are always neglected, like African Americans, and we are always grouped into the category Asians. Last year at PAC I was sitting quietly listening, but this year I am going to talk and be heard. You have to be the voice of your community to get what you want. This diverse group that we are, it should be heard that yes it's academic freedom, but we also need to let them know that yes you have an agenda but so do we. There has to be something in schools to draw the kids in. At the school district, they don't start listening to you unless it's a big crowd that is loudly demanding what they want. I will not sit quietly on PAC this year, I will represent my race and help them be heard.

## VII. Process to Set the PAC's Priorities for the Year

We reviewed the PAC's mission:

*The mission of the Parent Advisory Council is to advise the San Francisco Board of Education on existing and proposed education policies, bring forth issues of concern, and make suggestions about changes that will improve the achievement of students and the effectiveness of schools. The PAC will ensure parental input to the Board's decision-making through active outreach.*

Ruth described the PAC's process to set priorities: in the next meeting, we'll talk about the concerns we've heard from parents, issues PAC members are interested in, and the district's overall policy initiatives. What we can actually accomplish depends on the capacity of the PAC - we can say something is important, but if no one chooses to work on it then we can't really get that done.

PAC members had questions about the PAC's mission and role in the district:

- So the Board of Education decided to have a PAC? Going to the Board meeting and voicing parents' concerns, how are we going to present to them that we want a response, we don't want to be brushed off?
- Considering the Board created the PAC, do they have the final say despite what the PAC decided on?
- Has the PAC been listened to in the past?

Ruth explained that the district has many advisory committees; our role is to provide advice and recommendations to the Board of Education - but they don't have to follow those recommendations. In the past the Board has sometimes followed the PAC's recommendations that were different from SFUSD staff proposals, but not always.

## VIII. Community Outreach Opportunities and Reports

We reviewed a number of events the PAC has been invited or requested to participate in, and PAC members signed up for these:

Event	When	Who Signed Up
Parent Engagement Coalition	Wednesday, Sept. 7, 10am - 12 noon	RhoyalBaibé
SFCTA focus groups re: public transit	Week of Sept. 19, Time?	Betty, Gloria, Ruth
SFUSD Enrollment Fair	Saturday, Nov. 5, 10am-12 noon	Miranda, Carolyn, Betty, Georgia

## IX. PAC Business

- The next PAC meetings will be: September 20, October 18, November 15 and December 6.

- PAC members signed up to present the PAC report in upcoming Board of Education meetings:
  - September 13: Nancy and Rhoyal
  - September 27: Yue
  - October 11: Miranda
  - October 25: Georgia

**X. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**XI. Adjourn Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ruth Grabowski.