



San Francisco Board of Education
Parent Advisory Council

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the PAC
December 15, 2009

I. Attendance

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ruth Barajas, Georgia Bratt Williams, Un Un Che, Rochelle Fort, Nancy Gapasin Gnass, Diane Huang, Mandy Johnson, Stelly Kuo, Quran Mays, Michelle Menegaz.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tiana Blunt, Beatriz Gudino, Natasha LaVine.

ALSO PRESENT: Ruth Grabowski, PAC Staff; Jose Lam, Interpreter; Nicole Brown and Tony Litwak, California Community Dispute Services/SF Peer Court.

II. Call to Order/Roll Call

Michelle called the meeting to order at 6:25pm.

III. Presentation on Peer Court Program

Nicole Brown and Tony Litwak explained the Peer Court program, how it works and how parents can be involved. They started running the city's youth court about 9 years ago, and over the past few years there's been more momentum in the district for it. The goal is to address what the students have done and make it up to the community; the point of the program is that it's restorative, not punitive. Peer Court is the most highly replicated program ever in the juvenile justice system.

How it works: as an example, say that a student has stolen something from another student's purse. The principal has a few avenues: they could send the student home for a few days, and/or bring in the police – or send this case to Peer Court. The Peer Court could decide on a number of sentences, including community service, writing letters of apology, or other ways to restore the damage they've done. The principal gets to show what they have done to address the situation, and the student is being held accountable. If the student doesn't complete the terms agreed to, then the original sentence is in place, including being suspended, or arrested.

Tony explained that it's optional for principals to participate in this process, and it's been met with different levels of interest by principals. Next year, because of the Restorative Justice Resolution there will be a lot more opportunity for this program.

A PAC member asked how quickly it would go into effect, because students can be suspended immediately.

Tony explained a student might be given a four-day suspension, be out one day but agree to this process, and get to come back after that.

PAC members asked how to get more schools to refer students to the program, and pointed out that this is the first time they've heard of it, and wondered what the outreach is to make sure parents know this is an option.

Tony said that parents can advocate to the principal but the Peer Court program can't, and that their ability to do outreach is limited.

PAC members also asked what the capacity of the program is right now; Tony said they can handle 8-10 referrals a month. But if the program builds momentum they could handle more – they need to recruit and train more volunteers to handle more cases, but they could do that if the program grows.

In answer to a question about success rates, Tony explained the average recidivism rate in CA for students who do this program is less than 10%, vs. around 35% for students in probation programs around the state. So the program is successful as a prevention program as well.

IV. Report from PAC Chair

Michelle Menegaz reported that last week at the meeting of the Board of Education, Carolyn Alexander was appointed to the PAC. Michelle also made a joint statement with Suzanne from PPS & Michelle Parker from the district PTA about our working together to engage parents and the community in the budget process.

V. Report from PAC Vice Chair

Ruth Barajas reported that she attended the Afterschool for All Advisory Council as the PAC representative. Last year Stephanie was not only on AFA but the "Program Quality" working group. That group is looking at how to effectively use a self-assessment tool for programs to evaluate their own work. Another topic they discussed is that this year five pilot sites are testing having co-payments for families in the programs – next year it's expanding to 25 sites.

A PAC member asked whether EXCEL programs are all free. Currently they are – but their capacity is limited because of that. The idea is to be able to expand services by raising additional funding.

Ruth B. added that you might think some CBOs who provide services might be against it – but it's not just EXCEL programs doing this – at Harvey Milk it's not an EXCEL program, but we also need to raise more money every month to be able to serve all the students.

VI. Report from PAC Staff

Ruth Grabowski gave updates on several topics related to the PAC's funding:

- Our grant from the Zellerbach Family Foundation has been renewed – we received a two-year grant of \$50K a year – we have already received the total grant.
- We just submitted our year-end report to Zellerbach. In the past year, the PAC surpassed almost all our goals.
- Myong confirmed \$5K from the district for this year; we're working on the contract right now.
- The next proposal we'll work on is to renew our funding from the Walter & Elise Haas Fund.

VII. Community Engagement in Redesigning the Student Assignment System

Ruth G. gave an update on the district's progress in developing the new system, and on the PAC's community conversations. The last meetings will take place on January 15th – and we have 35 conversations scheduled.

Because of the Board's timeline for the process, and their scheduled meetings, we will present our findings and recommendations at two separate meetings – so that the PAC has the chance to look at all the data evaluating the options, before deciding on recommendations.

The PAC agreed to present the report of Findings at the Ad-Hoc Committee set for January 25, and to set a date for a special meeting on February 3rd to discuss all the data presented to the Board, and decide the PAC's recommendations and position on the options for student assignment.

Ruth G. and Ellie will meet several times to develop a framework for the Findings report, including Monday, December 21st, if anyone wants to join us. Michelle, Mandy, and Ruth B. would like to see the drafts and be involved in writing the reports.

VIII. Additional issues/projects for the PAC

Teacher and Administrator Quality

Nancy, Natasha, Georgia, Stelly and Betty met in early December to talk about action steps the PAC can take to support teacher and administrator standards and accountability. Several people on this team met again and identified district staff to talk to and follow up on specific questions and issues, including:

- Chris Armentrout, the PAC's liaison to the Board (and former teacher coach) about the Peer Assistance and Review program, which reviews and coaches teachers, to learn more about the PAR program's capacity, the process for referring teachers who do not meet standards, strategies for expanding the process of teacher referrals – and what the process is to support and hold accountable principals, as well
- Richard Maggi, at the newly-formed "Office of Family Voice," to learn more about how that office works, what they do, and what their capacity is
- Deena Zacharin at the office of School Family Partnership, about making information more easily available to parents through the district's website (including expanding access for parents to internet-capable computers, and training on how to use them)
- Bill Sanderson, who is in charge of implementing the new "A-G" graduation requirements, about ensuring that teachers and classes are in place, and that students are being taught to standards in elementary and middle school grades, as well as in high school, so they are able to fulfill the new graduation requirements.

The "TAQ" team is also reviewing the draft of the district's Parent Engagement Plan to see whether it addresses some of the most burning concerns we've heard from parents. The group will follow up on these action items and report back to the PAC about next steps.

Community Engagement and the District's Budget Process

The PAC discussed the general issue of doing community engagement on the district's process to address the drastic budget cuts from the state. Everyone agreed that this is an urgent issue, and that parents need to be informed and engaged in the process, but a few people felt the district should be leading this process, and expressed concern about the PAC's capacity to do another community engagement campaign this year. Others mentioned that it's a good opportunity to hear from parents, to help them learn about our work and promote the PAC – and to recruit new PAC members.

Another question is what community engagement in the budget process might look like. For example, the PAC could organize a few big community forums, or conduct smaller, site-based meetings like we've been doing about student assignment. A few people mentioned that the smaller, community-based meetings make it more possible for parents to speak up, and that organizing those kinds of meetings is our strength.

Ruth G. is meeting with Myong Leigh (SFUSD Deputy Superintendent for Policy and Operations), Gentle Blythe (SFUSD Office of Public Outreach & Communication) and Ellie Rossiter (Director of Parents for Public Schools) on January 8th to discuss the district's timeline and process for addressing the budget cuts, and a proposed School Site Council Summit in late February that could launch the community engagement process. She will report back about this meeting at the PAC's meeting on January 19th.

IX. PAC Business

The next regular PAC meetings will be January 19 and February 16, because that's when the most PAC members could attend.

X. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XI. Adjourn Meeting

Michelle adjourned the meeting at 8:40pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ruth Grabowski