



San Francisco Board of Education
Parent Advisory Council

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the PAC
February 16, 2010**

I. Attendance

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carolyn Alexander, Ruth Barajas, Tiana Blunt, Georgia Bratt Williams, Un Un Che, Nancy Gapasin Gnass, Beatriz Gudino, Stelly Kuo, Natasha LaVine, Quran Mays, Michelle Menegaz.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Diane Huang, Rochelle Fort, Mandy Johnson.

ALSO PRESENT: Ruth Grabowski, PAC Staff; Ray Lai, Interpreter; Chris Armentrout, SFUSD; Margaret Brodtkin, New Day for Learning; Cindy Choy, Parents for Public Schools; Kam Weng Tam and Bill Quan, SFUSD parents.

II. Call to Order/Roll Call

Ruth Barajas called meeting to order at 6:25pm.

Michelle Menegaz arrived soon afterwards and chaired the rest of the meeting.

Ruth Barajas moved to approve the Minutes for December 15, 2009, January 19 and January 27, 2010. Nancy Gapasin Gnass seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. The New Day for Learning Initiative

Margaret Brodtkin, the Director of the New Day for Learning collaborative, gave a presentation on their work and the community schools initiative.

New Day for Learning is collaborative between the city, the SFUSD, and community organizations. The initiative is an advocacy catalyst effort to change the way public schools and city agencies work together. Their office is at 135 Van Ness, across the hall from the PAC office. San Francisco was selected by the Mott Foundation as one of two national demonstration models. The NDFL philosophy is that schools should be the center of community and be full service centers. This is a national campaign that includes ten other cities.

Margaret showed a short excerpt from the NDFL video that showed several model programs. In San Francisco the initiative has 5 schools in pilot program; the objective is to bring more community services to the schools, and develop a model that can be replicated in other schools. A key idea is that kids need to learn all the time; they find that a lack of summer enrichment programs contributes to half the achievement gap. Currently they're developing summer learning initiative. The Board of Education has charged NDFL with coming up with a community school plan – with different levels of intensity and different curricula in the schools. They're holding a community schools symposium on Thursday, February 25th. Several PAC members signed up to attend the symposium.

Currently NDFL is a three-year grant but they hope to extend it to six years. A core belief is that schools alone can't be responsible to close the achievement gap. Right now they're looking for funding for PD on project-based learning for teachers across the district. The budget crisis might be an impetus – it has inspired some orgs to contribute to the district.

IV. Overview of SFUSD & Context for the PAC's Work

Ruth G. gave a brief update on district issues and community initiatives, as context for PAC members to talk about action steps.

Superintendent's proposal for student assignment & timeline for adopting system

- The proposal for student assignment is being revised on an ongoing basis, and important elements of it are changing every week. The current version looks like option #6; it's essentially local schools with the ability to apply to other schools. The lottery gives preference to siblings, local, and then academic diversity (for elementary and middle school); high school is straight up lottery.
- The Board will adopt a new policy on March 9; the Ad-Hoc Committee meets Feb. 17. Orla has offered to do an in-depth briefing for the PAC & PPS to talk about the proposal in more depth.

The budget process and opportunities for community engagement

- Superintendent Garcia wants the Board to adopt the "budget action plan" by March 23rd so schools have time this spring to plan for next year. We have been meeting with Deputy Superintendent Myong Leigh to talk about community engagement so people can understand and give opinions on proposed cuts before the decisions are made but this timeline is extremely short.
- We have been clear that the point of community meetings is to get information out and collect feedback to inform the decisions.
- The PAC has been given workshop time at the School Community Summit on Feb. 20 to start this process; we're going to use the time to generate questions to take to the community forums.

Teacher/Administrator Quality

- Nancy and Ruth G. met with Chris Armentrout and staff from the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program; and with Bill Sanderson, who's in charge of A-G graduation implementation.
- Nancy and Natasha met with Deena Zacharin to talk about the Parent Engagement Plan and ways to provide more tools to school sites to inform and engage families, and for parents to know what to do when they have concerns or problems at their children's schools.
- One idea we have is to meet with the BOE personnel/labor committee, to talk about standards and accountability measures, and how to make sure parents know about these.

Expanding Access to Afterschool Programs

- Staff has been working on a plan to align the ExCEL and Child Development Program afterschool programs; people are concerned about how the alignment is being implemented, and the fact that staff have not been sharing information about the plan with the AFA Council.
- Mollie Matull (a founding member of PAC and member of the Afterschool for All Advisory Council financing working group) is scheduling a meeting with Deputy Superintendent Richard Carranza to talk about a proposed alignment of district-managed afterschool programs.

District and Community Initiatives

- New Day for Learning: Community Schools Summit on Thursday, 2/25, 9am-1:30pm
- Bayview Empowerment Initiative: District staff coordinating this initiative invited the PAC to meeting, Thursday 2/18, 3-5pm to learn more about their strategies and talk about the budget forums.
- Mission Parent Summit, Saturday, March 20. Organized by Mission Graduates – focuses on health education, graduation, and grassroots issues in the Mission. Organizing summit at Mission High with the school liaison. Asked PAC to come and lead a workshop.

V. PAC Actions on Policy Issues: Overview/Goals/Next Steps

Student Assignment

Ruth G. and Ruth B. will attend the Ad Hoc meeting on Feb. 17; the PAC discussed talking points for them to be able to represent the PAC's response to the proposed assignment system. These include:

- There is a lot of mistrust about the process since it seems like the district's proposal is not taking into account the voice of the parents. What factors led staff to decide on this proposal? How does this proposal meet the Board's goals for equity and access?
- The options presented at the Committee of the Whole on February 2 were more closely aligned with the PAC & PPS recommendations, based on community input and the research presented by Stanford – so why did that change, and why does this proposal place more weight on local preference than on academic diversity preference?
- We don't see the community's input regarding equitable access to schools reflected in this proposal for elementary and middle school placement. We heard a lot of skepticism and suspicion in the community that the Board wasn't going to listen to parents' concerns about access to high quality schools – and PAC members share this concern.
- We recognize that the proposal mentions strategies for improving program placement, including placing high-demand programs in communities that don't currently have them (e.g. language immersion) – but wonder what the plan is to actually implement this, given the budget crisis and the amount of time needed to plan program placement in a transparent and strategic way.
- As we have reported before, we have a lot of concerns about the implementation and management of a new system. We are concerned about the lack of transparency around these issues, which are not being addressed publicly before the Board's intention to adopt a new system on March 9th.

Orla will do a briefing on the proposal on Friday, 2/26 10am-11:30am, at 135 Van Ness.

Community Forums about the SFSUD Budget

- The PAC has been working with PPS and district staff to plan community engagement in the budget process. The timeline for the Board to vote on an action plan is very short; the proposal is for the PAC and PPS to co-sponsor three community budget forums along with the district. We have not done events with the district before so Ruth G. wanted to bring some specific proposals to the PAC.
- Michelle moved that the PAC co-sponsor the community forums and include our logo on the flyers, and help to facilitate small group discussions at the forums. Ruth B. seconded the motion.

- In discussion, PAC members emphasized their concern about accountability for the district considering community input to the budget plan, and maintaining the PAC's credibility in co-hosting these events. PAC members agreed to do this only if we are able to present our findings from the forums - and recommendations - at the Committee of the Whole on the budget, on March 16.
- With this provision, PAC members unanimously approved the motion.

We then discussed who can volunteer to help facilitate small group discussions at the forums:

- 3/3, at Horace Mann MS: Ruth G., Ruth B., Michelle, Natasha, Betty, Georgia, and Nancy
- 3/10, at Thurgood Marshall HS: Ruth G., Ruth B. and Tiana
- 3/11, at Francisco MS: Natasha and Michelle

Expanding Access to Afterschool Programs

Ruth B. has been going to Afterschool for All Advisory Council, and wants to make sure there is discussion on the PAC about issues being addressed there. One issue with the alignment between the ExCEL and CDC programs is starting to charge fees at ExCEL programs (which have been free). Some people are concerned that low-income families will be pushed out of the spaces in ExCEL in practice even if this is not by design. Ruth B. requested that the PAC discuss the proposed alignment in more depth at a future meeting.

VI. Consider Request to Support Resolution on Pilot Curriculum

Someone contacted Ruth G. to ask that the PAC support the Resolution sponsored by Commissioners Fewer and Kim to start a pilot Ethnic Studies curriculum at five high schools. Ruth G. is not sure of this person's role but she appears to be a consultant (based on her web site). A professor from SF State worked with teachers in the district to develop this proposal. Ruth asked her to send more information about the Resolution, and she sent the proposal but did not provide answers to Ruth's questions.

Discussion among the PAC members included:

- Would the proposed curriculum fulfill A-G requirements? Nancy asked Bill Sanderson and he said no. How can we add courses that don't fulfill A-G?
- How can the district afford to fund this, in the context of budget cuts? It needs to be part of a larger strategy; could possibly get funding from outside of district.
- Our understanding was that the proposal came from students - and we support that. How can we get our questions answered about how this will be implemented?

Nancy moved that the PAC not endorse the Resolution at this time, since we don't have answers to our questions. Stelly seconded the motion.

Six PAC members voted to approve the motion; three voted to oppose it. (Ruth B., Carolyn, and Betty voted to oppose the motion, since they wanted the PAC to endorse the Resolution.)

PAC members expressed concern that it would appear to be opposed to Ethnic Studies, when the issue was more about lacking answers to questions. Everyone agreed that the PAC is not taking a position against the curriculum, but is not able to endorse the Resolution without answers to some questions.

VII. PAC Business

The PAC usually meets on the third Tuesday of the month, but the Board's Committee of the Whole meeting about the budget will be on that Tuesday, March 16. Based on responses to the Doodle schedule survey about availability, most people are available to meet on Thursday, March 18.

For April, it appears the meeting will be 4/20 or 4/21, depending on if there are Board committee meetings that week. Ruth G. will confirm this.

VIII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IX. Adjourn Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Natasha LaVine