



San Francisco Board of Education
Parent Advisory Council

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the PAC
January 19, 2010**

I. Attendance

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ruth Barajas, Georgia Bratt Williams, Un Un Che, Rochelle Fort, Nancy Gapasin Gnass, Beatriz Gudino, Mandy Johnson, Stelly Kuo, Natasha LaVine, Quran Mays.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tiana Blunt, Diane Huang, Michelle Menegaz.

ALSO PRESENT: Ruth Grabowski, PAC Staff; Jose Lam, Interpreter; Suzanne Morikawa Madden, Vicki Symonds, Cindy Choy, Valerie Higgins, Ellie Rossiter, and Carla Cuevas, Parents for Public Schools; Carol Lei, parent; Orla O’Keeffe, SFUSD.

II. Call to Order/Roll Call

Ruth Barajas called the meeting to order at 6:21pm.

Nancy moved to approve the Minutes from the PAC meeting of November 17, 2009. Carolyn seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Staff and volunteers from Parents for Public Schools were invited to participate in several discussions, based on our partnership in community engagement on the student assignment redesign.

III. Options for a New Student Assignment System: Orla O’Keeffe, SFUSD

Orla O’Keeffe led a discussion about proposed changes to the student assignment system, following the discussion guide the district, the PAC and PPS have used in community conversations. In response to the Board’s priorities for a new system, PAC members commented:

- How is the budget process factored into making this decision?
- Why is it being done right now when the district is in turmoil?
- Measures aren’t addressing transparency it’s in the implementation
- We heard concerns from parents that race is actually factored in, since it is asked for on the enrollment application – how and where is it being used?
- What is our ability to implement any of these systems?
- Is the board working with external orgs such as businesses? – shouldn’t be isolated
- The state and federal move is towards more choice; what if we move away from that trend?

Ms O’Keeffe responded:

- Population density is part of the complexity of this system. Where kids live is not necessarily where schools are. We also have shared facilities with charter schools.
 - The Board has been working on this for a long time; the budget is not a driver but always factored in. The district will have a fiscal impact analysis for the options.
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- Board getting as much community feedback as possible – Superintendent meets with SF school Alliance and others in the city
- State and federal emphasis on choice being factored in.
- Transparency means lots of things to lots of people – looking at how people learn to “game” the process, and making the implementation process transparent.
- We ask about race/ethnicity on applications to capture info for federal reporting – it has nothing to do with student assignment. In fact, we ask for a lot of information on the applications unrelated to placement, because it’s a good opportunity to capture a lot of data as families enroll.
- Outreach definitely needs to be factored in but has limited ability to address some of the issues we are facing: quality of school, transportation, supporting families with different needs.

Ms O’Keeffe then described the six options being considered. PAC members and guests responded:

- What does academic diversity mean? Answer: It means having the full range of students’ abilities represented in all schools. You wouldn’t want to use individual student records or give students a mistaken motive for doing badly on tests (thinking it would help them get into a certain school). We are exploring how to develop achievement values based on data from census tracts.
- How are options going to address families with special needs, homeless families, and families in transition? Answer: We have not spoken about Special Ed student placement separately because whatever process we have needs to work for all students. The system will honor the IEP and match the system used for general ed. A PAC member noted that the district is not taking care of special ed students needs now so how will they do this in the new program?

IV. Developing Report of Findings from Community Conversations about Student Assignment

Ruth G. presented charts showing where community conversations were held, and demographic information about the participants. She noted that over 580 people participated in the conversations, and that similar to last spring, the participants reflected the diversity of the SFUSD and the city. Although some groups were slightly over- or under-represented in the district, it was generally in the range of difference between the SFUSD and the city as a whole. She also noted the challenge of reaching African American families, since several schools either canceled their meetings or didn’t do sufficient outreach.

PAC members noted the need to follow up on what’s happening with the parent liaisons at those schools, outside of this report – to ensure that this is addressed at these schools. We should also take a hard look at what we need to do to reach these families, since we can’t necessarily count on the parent liaisons to do that for us.

Ruth G. then reviewed the draft outline for the report, and the key findings from the conversations. These include the note that many parents do not have a lot of respect or belief in what the district is saying and doing – this is something that Board members asked us to report on.

We confirmed who will attend the Board meeting on February 2, and who will help present the report. Georgia and Betty plan to attend; Ruth B., Michelle, Mandy, Carolyn, and Quran agreed to help with the presentation.

Ruth G. said the PAC and PPS will put out a joint press release announcing the reports and asked who is willing to be a media contact. Rochelle is willing to talk to media, if she is able to attend that night. PAC members asked Ruth G. to be the PAC's media contact, and she agreed.

The PAC will hold a Special Meeting on Wednesday, January 27 to discuss and approve formal recommendations on the student assignment system, following the January 25 meeting of the Board's Ad-Hoc Committee on Student Assignment.

V. Additional Issues and Projects

The PAC discussed proposed action steps on several issues.

Community engagement in SFUSD budget process:

- The School Site Council Summit will be on February 20, and we are thinking to launch community engagement in the budget as part of the Summit. We want to play the role of getting voices and information out to the schools, and then give parent input back to the district. We want to inform decision-making, not do PR for the district.
- Another goal is for the district to provide guidance about the level of flexibility for making decisions at the school level versus by the district. Part of this will be to have discussions about trade-offs (for example, having a shorter school year or maintain classroom size). We are also suggesting having time for SSC members from each school to work together.
- We need some training on how to get this information to the community. Also need to make a commitment to engage the African American community; we need to put more time into building relationships with these communities. Can also share this information at the churches.

Teacher/principal standards & accountability:

- The PAC formed a work team we're calling "TAQ" - for teacher and administrator quality. Plan to meet with Chris Armentrout to get an update on the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) process. Nancy spoke with Ellie to see about working with us.
- Georgia talked to office of Family Voice (Ramon). He said first try to encourage parents to resolve issues at the school site, and if that doesn't work then can go to the Family Voice office for help. They are getting about 10 calls a day and parents don't even know about it now.
- If teachers and principals had a basic checklist of what needs to be done, we would have better accountability.
- Nancy and Ruth will also meet with Bill Sanderson to talk about the status of implementing the A-G graduation requirements (which will begin for 9th graders in the 2010-11 school year).

Parent Engagement Plan:

- Members of the TAQ team are meeting with Deena Zacharin next Tuesday at 12pm to get an update on the Plan.

VI. PAC Business

- The PAC will have a Special Meeting on Wednesday, January 27 to discuss and approve Recommendations for the new student assignment system.
- The next Regular Meeting will be Tuesday, February 16.

- No one from the PAC is available to present a report to the Board on January 26; Ruth will provide a written report, and can present the report on the PAC's behalf.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Adjourn Meeting

Ruth B. adjourned the meeting at 8:55pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Natasha LaVine