



San Francisco Board of Education
Parent Advisory Council

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the PAC
November 17, 2009**

I. Attendance

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tiana Blunt, Rochelle Fort, Diane Huang.

ALSO PRESENT: Chris Armentrout, SFUSD; Carolyn Alexander, parent; Ruth Grabowski, PAC Staff; Jose Lam, Interpreter.

II. Call to Order/Roll Call

Michelle called the meeting to order at 6:17pm.

III. Update on SFUSD Issues

Ruth G. reported that at the last Board of Education meeting there was an update on the School Loop and Data Director programs. School Loop has not been rolled out at elementary schools, only in middle and high schools so far; they are just beginning to train elementary teachers and start outreach to parents – which is why most parents have not really heard about School Loop.

One question we have had is how to reach families without access to the internet? District staff reported that they are also training public library staff and providing computers for families to use. The parent liaison at James Lick, and educators at a community organization in the Mission, shared their experiences with computer classes for families. School Loop has actually become a parent empowerment tool in their programs – with parents training each other and using email that they usually hadn't shared with the school.

Carolyn mentioned how people with disabilities can access information differently, including using technology. As a whole she thinks it is great. There is an element of School Loop that uses the telephone to contact families who don't have computers.

IV. Report from PAC Chair

Michelle – and many PAC members - went to the district's Enrollment Fair. Thanks to everyone who helped at the PAC's table that day. She mentioned that there is talk that the district might not do an enrollment fair next year because of the cost and resources it requires.

V. Report from PAC Vice Chair

Ruth B. will start to attend the Afterschool for All Advisory Council starting tomorrow, representing the PAC. In addition to the Council on the whole, there are several working groups, and she will figure out which one to participate in.

VI. Report from PAC Staff

Ruth G. recognized and appreciated all the work that PAC members have been doing. She mentioned:

- Betty is the “PAC member of month” – for setting up the first community conversation
- Quran participated in a parent panel for Teachers for Social Justice
- Many people involved in enrollment fair and helping develop and test the SAS discussion guide
- Several people attended the district’s Principal meetings

Ruth G. also mentioned that she is taking a sabbatical over the summer, for three months.

VII. Candidate for Appointment to the PAC

Ruth G. and Michelle interviewed Carolyn Alexander, who is a candidate for appointment to the PAC. Carolyn spoke briefly; she grew up in San Francisco and went to public schools there. She is a guardian of her niece and also has a granddaughter, at ISA. She feels parents need to be part of the district so we don’t lose the communication and bond. She is very concerned about all communities and all children. She works with seniors and parents in the community in many capacities, and wants to find more ways to involve parents in their children’s education.

Natasha moved to nominate Carolyn for appointment to the PAC. Ruth B seconded the motion. The PAC voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Ruth G will have Carolyn’s appointment placed on the agenda for the Board’s meeting on December 8th.

VIII. Community Engagement in Redesigning the Student Assignment System

Ruth G. gave an update on the district’s progress in developing the new system:

- District staff are working with researchers from Stanford; at the next Ad Hoc committee meeting on Dec. 14th, at 6pm, they will present preliminary findings from research and findings. They will have childcare if you call ahead. If you’re not able to make it, the meeting is broadcast on the SF gov. TV station and streamed on the Board’s web page.
- On Monday, January 25th the PAC and PPS will present our report of findings to the BOE, where they will also be hearing more data from researchers. They may set a special meeting to review more data.
- We have the discussion guide, handouts and surveys ready and are set to begin Community Conversations – and the first one is tomorrow at Marshall HS. The conversations need to be done by January 15th.
- We also received a grant – between the PAC, PPS, and the district – to cover direct expenses of the meetings. We have a budget to provide childcare, refreshments, and have a transcriber for every meeting.

IX. Additional issues/projects for the PAC

Ruth G. reviewed a table listing the projects the PAC is already working on, and new issues to consider. There were some initial questions about how the PAC has made decisions in the past over which issues to work on, and the criteria for prioritizing issues. At first, the PAC had no formal process identify or prioritize issues – basically, individual PAC members got involved in whatever interested them (e.g., developing the district’s Arts Master Plan).

Because the PAC is more visible (and has gained credibility across the district), the PAC is being asked by SFUSD staff to provide input and/or work on a variety of projects. At the same time, we see the budget crisis looming and know that parent voices need to part of the district’s budget process.

The PAC needs to step back and figure out how we decide what our priorities are. We would actually need a retreat to talk this through but because we can’t wait until we have time for that, over the next few meetings we’ll get through what we can. We may want to think about planning a mid-year retreat to assess our priorities.

Ruth G. handed out background information to look at, including the mission and goals for PAC. Five years ago the PAC had no set priorities and when Ruth came on staff started working with PAC members to set goals and priorities each year. Since then we have gone through cycles of conducting outreach, identifying key issues of concern to parents, looking at issues the Board was addressing, and ensuring the PAC represented parent voices in key issues we had heard parents talk about. Examples have been informing proposed changes to student assignment, ensuring the parcel tax (Prop. A on the June 2008 ballot) funded teacher training and accountability, and the need to expand access to high quality afterschool programs.

The PAC reviewed a list of criteria for prioritizing immediate new projects. People pointed out that it’s hard to weigh the criteria without putting in major time. Also, the reality is that if an important issue comes to the PAC that no one is interested in working on we can’t do it.

We discussed projects that the PAC is already working on, besides the student assignment redesign:

Expanding access to high-quality afterschool programs: Ruth B. is now on the Afterschool for All Advisory Council; this meets PAC goals because in our outreach a few years ago we heard from parents it was a huge issue, which is why we began working on this topic.

District’s Parent Engagement Plan: This is being led by district staff with support from the New Day for Learning project and the PAC. Writing the Plan has kind of stalled since the deadline was extended and we need to push on district staff and partners to progress. Will get feedback on the draft Plan from some Board members on soon. PAC members agreed this project meets many of our goals; we need to ensure that issues the PAC is passionate about are addressed in the plan. Need to look at next draft to ensure issues are represented. Carol noted that you need to listen to people and what their issues are. Georgia mentioned that we need to think about students that don’t have family advocates and where/if it is mentioned in PEP. Ruth B. mentioned surrogate parent plan and will send information to the PAC.

We then reviewed projects the PAC has been asked to work on, including:

Budget cuts: The state is going to drastically cut the district’s funding, and the PAC could be involved in engaging parents to let them know what’s going on, and inform the district’s process to set funding

priorities. Deputy Superintendent Myong Lee wants PAC to work with the district to engage the community in this. At same time the PTA and other parents have started talking about statewide advocacy to avoid the cuts. Ruth G. and Natasha have gone to a couple of these planning meetings, to know what is happening. The idea is that PPS and the PAC would look at the local focus, and informing the Board of Education, while the PTA would address state advocacy, and we could share information about both of these initiatives. This would meet the PAC's goals because it's the biggest issue facing the district and parent voices should be heard in process, because it's directly tied to student achievement.

Implementing A-G graduation requirements: The PAC was invited to sit on the Community Task Force for implementing the graduation requirements. The group meets every other month through February. The next meeting is Dec. 10th. Nancy is interested in participating.

Improving lunch/food: There are several district committees monitoring student nutrition, and a newer community group is trying to get more changes to happen. Stelly has attended one of their meetings; we don't know what they are working on right now.

New Day for Learning is a city-SFUSD collaboration working to bring more resources to schools. There are five "early adopter" pilot schools they are working with: Charles Drew Academy, Paul Revere K-8, Hillcrest ES, John Muir ES, and Burton HS. The NDFL Director has invited the PAC to be part of the collaborative team, as an accountability measure (being accountable to parents). Ruth G. has attended several meetings; they are interesting and so far we don't have to do any work besides attend the meetings.

PAC members agreed to continue talking about how to prioritize which projects to work on, at the next meeting. Ruth G. asked if people think the budget is a priority issue that the PAC should work on, and everyone agreed it's important. Ruth G. and Michelle will go to the meeting of the PTA and PPS to talk more about these issues, and will report back to the PAC.

X. PAC Business

We set meeting dates for Tuesday, Dec. 15th and Tuesday, January 19th

Report to the Board of Education on Dec. 8th – Quran and Diane are on the sign-up; Stelly may possibly go and could take Diane's place if needed. Michelle is also available.

Plan to Lead: they are having their annual dinner, and giving an award to the Visitacion Valley Parents Association. PAC member Un Un Che is a leader at VVPA and receiving an award. The PAC agreed to buy a ticket to support it; but no one is able to attend, and agreed a friend of Un Un may use the ticket.

Ruth G. said we have enough money in the budget to purchase PAC t-shirts for people to wear at public events; PAC members agreed this would be a good idea to pursue.

XI. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XII. Adjourn Meeting

Michelle adjourned the meeting at 8:39pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ruth Grabowski