



San Francisco Board of Education Parent Advisory Council

Report to the Board of Education

February 14, 2017

The role of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is to represent parent voices and perspectives to inform Board of Education policy discussions and decisions. This report provides an update on activities in the PAC's priority areas.

Student Assignment

Recently, PAC members attended the Ad Hoc Meeting on Student Assignment, which discussed the opportunities and challenges created by the current assignment system related to Special Education Services and Multilingual Programs. PAC members spoke during public comment and raised questions about the district's efforts to support the intersection of these two services and programs. While these questions were addressed that evening, the PAC would like to revisit some of the themes from this meeting to engage the entire Board.

Many of the issues that emerged at the ad hoc meeting continued to surface concerns for our students who have been historically underserved and are impacted the greatest by our district's gap in achievement and opportunity, such as African American and Latino students and those students with IEPs (Individual Educational Programs). For example, the data shows these students tend to experience limited access to our language pathways. PAC members wonder,

- What are we doing as a district to support students with IEPs to participate in our language pathways, especially since a disproportionate number of African American and Latino students have IEPs?

We recognize that several challenges identified at the ad hoc meeting are the result of unintended consequences created by the assignment systems, and the district is committed to interrupting the systems and structures that perpetuate the racial isolation and segregation found in our schools as a result. However, it is not always evident how the system is being altered to shift these patterns to improve outcomes.

To this point, the data has demonstrated for years that African American and Latino families do not turn in their enrollment applications on time for the first round of school offers, and yet, the efforts to interrupt this trend are not obvious. PAC members want to know,

- What concrete actions, supports and strategies is the district taking to address and support African American and Latino families to participate in the first round of enrollment applications to shift in this historical pattern?

We know if these families do not participate in the first round of the enrollment process, then chances of African American and Latino students gaining to access language pathways is further compromised due to the high demand and limited seats available. This ripple effect is no doubt a contributing factor to the shockingly low number of African American students enrolled in our language pathway programs across the district, 103 to be exact spanning kindergarten through 12th grade. Again, PAC members wonder,

- What are we doing as a district to specifically increase African American participation in dual immersion language programs?

The PAC applauds the African American Parent Advisory Council and its co-chairs, Rionda Batiste and Mauricha Farrell for the taking the initiative to address this challenge head on. They organized an enrollment workshop in their community and worked strategically with district leaders, who support Bayview schools, and staff from the Educational Placement Center (EPC) to provide essential information to African American families on the enrollment process. As a result, EPC was able to accept applications on the spot. These intentional efforts are needed to reverse the historical trends our district is deliberately trying to interrupt.

Over the years, the PAC has heard in our community conversations that school communities struggle to bridge across differences in their students' ethnicity, socioeconomic background and home language. Specifically, in schools where there is a dual immersion program and a general education pathway, this challenge is exacerbated and the racial isolation and segregation can be even more pronounced.

During the PAC's conversations on racial equity a few years back, we learned that school communities are receptive and eager to genuinely have conversations about cultural differences as a means to work toward greater unity but do not know how. Many principals need support, coaching and tools to be able to address these school culture and climate issues. The PAC made concrete recommendations on this matter and still would like to know,

- What supports and tools are schools leaders and communities getting to engage in dialogues that focus on bridging across cultural differences, particularly in schools with dual immersion programs and general education pathways to disrupt racial isolation?

As we enter into the budget season and begin to explore potential tradeoffs, the PAC is curious about,

- How solutions to student assignment challenges might inform budget discussions and what are the budget implications, if any, for resourcing some of these efforts?

The PAC will continue to follow the conversation on student assignment as it moves forward.

Transportation

In November, the PAC shared with the Board of Education one of our priorities this year is to elevate SFUSD families' concerns about transportation based on what we learned last year during the Our Children, Our Families Campaign and the LCAP (Local Control and Accountability Plan) stakeholder engagement.

The PAC is aware that the Budget and Business Services Committee met recently to discuss the transportation budget and services. While PAC members were not able to attend the meeting we were able to listen to the recording.

The PAC was glad to hear Commissioner Emily Murase acknowledge the concerns of families from Treasure Island. Last year the PAC also shared their concerns about how the yellow bus service from the island to two pre-designated middle schools **limits their choice for student assignment**. Furthermore, families felt without transportation it is **difficult for their children to participate in school events, afterschool programs and extracurricular activities**. In the words of a Treasure Island parent,

"We need access, on the outskirts, when programs close we see the impact. Kids need to be able to participate in their school programs but can't without transportation. Easy to disconnect from school community when they don't participate."

In addition, during our LCAP stakeholder engagement campaign last year, participants urged district staff to work with the city officials and departments to **address transportation needs**, especially for students who are struggling – including Foster Youth placed outside the city, students who are chronically late or absent, and families with students in multiple schools traveling on public transportation.

As the district's working group on transportation gets underway the PAC urges them to:

- Address transportation options for families on Treasure Island and its impact on school choice and student participation in afterschool programs and activities
- Consider creating central pick up and drop off zones aligned with existing yellow school bus routes to maximize service and increase ridership
- Work with the city officials to explore:
 - Increasing the number schools served by School Trippers
 - Further expanding service on the 10 most popular MUNI bus lines during school commute hours
 - Assessing the need to increase the number of MUNI bus lines that augment their service during school commute hours (beyond the 10 already identified)

The PAC supports Commissioner Rachel Norton's request for a Committee of the Whole on the topic of transportation. The PAC believes transportation is a critical area of work that cuts across many issues that impact SFUSD students and families.

SFUSD Communication Tools

Last week, Jessica Wan, from the Office of Public Information, met with the PAC to discuss improving the district's channels of communications and to gathered feedback on the SFUSD's tools for communicating with families. The PAC appreciates the opportunity to provide input and is committed to working with district staff, our labor and community partners to improve home-school communication.

PAC Recruitment and Outreach

The PAC is actively recruiting new members for next school year 2017-2018. Applications are available on our website in English, Spanish and Chinese at www.pacsf.org and are due by Friday, April 21, 2017.

*If you have any questions or comments about this report, or the PAC's work in general,
please contact the PAC at (415) 355-2201, or at pac@sfusd.edu.
You can visit our website at www.pacsf.org*