

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



Meeting of the School Quality Working Group (SQWG) II

Date:

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Time:

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Location:

Zoom

<https://k12-bostonpublicschools.zoom.us/j/84377708897>

Agenda Items:

- 1) Welcome and Introductions
 - i. Marinelle kicked us off with an agenda review
 - ii. Activator: what's your superpower?

- 2) Review and Discussion
 - SQWG II purpose
 - Hardin talked about the history of SQWG (see slides)
 - Need for families to understand quality as it relates to choosing their schools
 - How does it work for families and for our educators?
 - Communicating value is always challenging
 - growing need for more people to come to this group to learn/add voice/do more problem solving (HARDIN'S GOAL)
 - Marinelle: What is the convo we want to have?
 - Appreciation for the timeline/look back at where we came from (see timeline slide)
 - Pandemic... challenges with having the data
 - Questions going forward about where do we go from here?

- Participation on the group has changed over time and we'll need to consider this again tonight.
- SQF Review
 - Jake did a review of the holistic measurement tool for school quality.
 - Domain review (75% is student performance)
 - Student opportunities index was a challenge
 - Context -
 - pandemic - disruption - no mcas in 2020; 2021 came with online assessments and alternative surveys. Substantial disruptions for data.
 - State: chosen not to have accountability tiers for schools this year (except for chronically underperforming) - their testing data was released but not used for accountability. 2022 data will be used as a baseline
 - Unlike state, we need tiers for student assignment; choice process begins in November
 - Not ideal situation but we need to keep tiers the same for one more year; and have data for next year.
 - Question: what alternatives were considered and why not go with one of those?
 - 2021 data is flawed. Participation rate for mcas was low and surveys were not existent; for example families who have been with the school two years but this is the first time they have been able to enter the building. So climate data would be flawed.
 - Hardin: how will this be heard and reacted to by all stakeholders?
 - denise: we start making a Plan B for next year so that pandemic, etc. would not get in the way of measurement
 - Hardin: Eva Mitchell proposed deep dive of $\frac{1}{3}$ schools each year. Would that provide more stability? Maybe bring in an expert to discuss? Hardin thinks its a good idea.
 - Sarah - areas that this is a good option. Also expressed frustration that we are talking now about November? We've discussed Plan B before and it went nowhere. Keeping Tiers is sound but its not serving families well. Inequalities are stubborn. Shifts in enrollment, dropout rates, etc. What are

we doing to ensure the bottom doesn't drop out for schools with enrollment challenges.

- Jake - one approach that is helpful is actually keeping the tiers – provides consistent access to the schools if they looked last year, now, in November.
- Sarah but schools get stuck in the data... lower score schools get stuck. But would no one benefit from the data now?
- Marinelle - we'll get to the plan b later in this group and also view the multiple paths given the HBAP Equity Analysis
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- Home-Based Assignment Plan Equity Analysis
 - Brown/Ann... Lawyers unable to reach an agreement that would allow the the work to move forward.
 - last year, ODA entered into research agreement with MIT
 - They will do an annual analysis along with other research
 - Lisa- I know I was skeptical at first about having MIT analyze the system they built, but all these years later they and all of us question if the system does what it was supposed to do.
 - Gave data in August; goal for delivery is December; we'll unpack it in this group
 - BPS internal have met to determine questions and provide MIT with data
 - QUESTIONS:
 - Lisa to share questions with the group
 - Hardin - how do we prepare the community at large for ths report, so they can anticipate it is coming; generate pre-questions; if they are surprised, they will feel like to was done behind heir back. How do we start communicating about this now? Where can they ask their questions.
 - Who needs direct communications?
 - CBERT and SC regulars; high flyers, advocates – all need direct convos
 - Denise – elevate this to Comms and the LT
 - Sara: stomach kind of dropped that its MIT and not Brown/Ann - nuanced understanding –
 - Say why BA was chosen (our values), and why we are working with MIT to ensure these values get addressed. What constraints and opportunities exist. How are we holding MIT accountable?

- Messing with math hasn't led to better outcomes for generationally marginalized students.
 - Next Steps
 - Marinelle - Not increasing access to quality by keeping Tiers. Law of unintended consequences... Leads more to the larger question of are we just rearranging the deck chairs in a system; what's the larger set of question and where is the appetite to take this on?
 - Hardin - stomach to take on choice??
 - Sarah - Tier one schools belong on everyone's lists; radical choices that are worth playing out . Tinkering won't be enough. BIG IDEAS are needed. Right questions/people at the table to steer the ship.
 - Next Meeting: Review the Audit; maybe January/February and structure it as more of a community engagement opportunity for input. Engaging the Supt and Mayor's office on this recommendation. The jumping off point would be the analysis;
 - Maybe a meeting with the researchers to be an outside/inside eyes before it goes to school committee?
 - Lisa - original team meeting with ODA and researchers and add this recommendation to pre-meet with this a subgroup of this SQWG.

Lisa addressed membership

- Still have open positions to recruit to this workgroup.
- Marinelle reminder why we come together. Are we looking for a long term commitment? If not, is it worth rebuilding the group?
- Hardin - reminded of our role – informed, critical, thoughtful role to be their external reference point. this is a reason to guide membership. Parent leader group reps to be here, as well as other groups. They would be well informed and able to communicate. Community organizations who are engaged in more technical space, too.
- Franklin would like to see us not just demonstrate what a good school looks like but also advocate for how more schools get to that?
- For example, where do facilities fit in?
- Hardin - where is there an external body that looks at all the school improvement plans? who looks at them? Who helps them grow, Tier accountability wise? Lower tiers get this a bit more by default.
- Marinelle advocated for Rayna because School Fund focuses on expanding access to quality.
- Rayna - we also help build Boston School Finder. She can probably pull data on who spends time there, the demographic info.

Hardin - internal group write up the charge to bring to school committee.

3) Public Comment

- a. Peggy W – appreciate all of your service, especially Hardin who continued after SC and raised good questions today. There's a history to this assignment system and process and while I appreciate the last comment, you must take into consideration that School Finder when started was the subject of a lot of concern because its not just BPS, its charter and private, and parochial. Will get a lot of public comment if you start there/build on that. Gather there is already a contract with MIT, but wonder if Michael Alves, who built the three zone system, continues to work on assignment systems around the country, including San Antonio. Is there room for him or someone like him, in addition to the MIT group?

4) Closing Comments and Adjournment

- a. Lisa will follow up with next dates; shared deck in the chat.

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