



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE'S  
SCHOOL QUALITY WORK GROUP MEETING**

**December 18, 2018**

The Boston School Committee's School Quality Work Group II held a meeting on December 18, 2018 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, room 6-65, Roxbury, Massachusetts. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

**ATTENDANCE**

Members Present: Craig Lankhorst, Gloria West, Josh Weiss, Hardin Coleman, Marinelle Rousmarnier

Members Absent:

BPS Staff: Jake Stern, Donna Muncey, Rebecca Brown, Mark Racine, Mary Driscoll, Monica Roberts, Lisa Harvey

Others in attendance: Julia Meija, Ivelisse Caraballo, Lisa Brown, Peggy Wiesenber

**DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

November 8, 2018 meeting minutes

*List others*

*2018-2019 School Quality Working Group II Proposed Topics and Timeline*

*CPLAN School Standards*

*School Quality Framework Overview*

*Report for Boston District Levels*

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## CALL TO ORDER

Hardin Coleman called the meeting to order.

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

### Parent Advocates (CPLAN)

- Idea of using a qualitative design suggest by Dr. Coleman (e.g., focus groups)
- When asked about how deal with it when hear from single people about a bad experience - going to have enough responses to see where things are an isolated case
- They do match-making – connect with others who know better about a particular school. Someone who has experienced directly.
- They know what a quality experience should look like which informs their data gathering.
- Mary – tension between data not be public but a tool for parents. CPLAN – want to be thoughtful about how to share. Don't want to shame but also give parents info and incent school to improve, accountability. Explain in conversation vs. "D" grade. Conversation explain more deeply as a match. People don't want to release if results are bad. Want to build partnerships. Have a huge range of education and careers, different perspectives. Speaking in a diverse group, can make more culturally responsive about how use language.
- Jake – it might be valuable to focus on across-sector: charter, parochial - less information out there for them. As a parent would love to see across sectors.
- They compile so not beholden to politics. When partnering with Boston Compact, BC wouldn't let them release the information because of political constraints. CPLAN wants to be independent but weighing all of the issues.
- They want to use the framework to build on the process of SQF.
- CPLAN - They are interested in bringing in parents to give feedback. Dr. Coleman would love to have parents recommended for the SQWG II too.
- CPLAN - Whenever a parent has an issue, this is opportunity to help the parent and get a win so they'll stay in the school, rather than losing so many students because of these experiences.
- CPLAN – very much welcome any ideas, thoughts.

### SQF Update

- Jake - We have a lot of good news
  - We've really made leaps and bounds in getting data up to date.
  - Prior years had to use really old data, but this year we've used the most current data (comparing 16-17 to 17-18)
  - Need to see best way to give families choices without penalizing schools.

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- Did update the tiers for all schools, and at the same time gave parents a wider basket of choices – received schools from the new tiers plus the ones they would've gotten with the old tiers
- High schools have information on tiers and metrics, but the information doesn't have choice implications
  - Searching on discover bps
  - There is also information on "softer" things like whether school requires uniforms.
- Better school climate data this year. Two years of comparable data with a survey that's been more vetted and honed.
- State is no longer using the tier numbers so less confusing.
- Work to do this year:
  - Over this year, we can explore changes to policy that we could bring back to school committee in the spring
  - Also how can we improve the model – maybe adding Opportunity and Access - to bring to school committee in the spring.
  - Need to talk about when to update the tiers, what's the most fair way to do that for parents and school
  - Mary Driscoll – we need to address the override issue – biggest source of negative feedback from turnaround schools. Would score much higher but because of override stay level 4. They aren't happy.
  - Should high schools be treated the same as K-8 – should they have tier ratings?
  - Should early learning centers have tiers?
  - Maybe need some high school leaders to include on SQWG II
  - Mary D. - did anything change with 6<sup>th</sup> grade baskets. We knew 6<sup>th</sup> grade didn't meet minimum quality, we went further and determined quality issues for 6-8 and k-1. 6-8 is now fixed so now students have minimum quality guarantee. Kindergarten still needs work.
  - Dr. Coleman is curious about what is the probability that a family gets the choices they are offered. The issue may be seats not schools. Families may appreciate transparency over false choices. We are adding tier 1 & 2 schools to lists but students are unlikely to get in.
  - Eric – you can't know because budget not completed. So don't know where it will sort out.
  - Gary - can't be predicted but could use past data. Some things are pretty constant, but there are variables that change (e.g., seat count changes).
  - Discover website shows "k2 demand" – 17 open seats, 74 applicants.
  - Eric pointed out that this is only helping the super engaged parents, not helping the less engaged parents. Adding more math only helps with higher ed people.
  - Some people come in prepared with welcome services with their school choices, but others not at all so have a lot to go through in a short period of time.
  - Rebecca - Technology divide is also an issue – access to technology and ability to navigate. Even some families (e.g., experiencing homelessness) don't have smart phone. Do we need to also communicate the information in other ways.

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- Dr. Coleman – where we can't do things, we need to explain to the community why we can't satisfy what they ask for.
- Craig – this seats issue is the major recommendation from the BARI report. We need to see if there is some way to address this and be very clear where and why we can't. Need to be solid in our recommendation.
- Marinel – seems like we are drowning in information. Is this helping families? Schools?
- Complicated system and information
- People feel like they don't have a chance to get into quality school so the information doesn't help. Root issue is that the system isn't providing what it was intended to.
- Not enough quality schools, and because of where you live there is much smaller likelihood to actually get into the quality schools.

Jake explaining the explanation of the metrics (technical report).

- each metric has its own graph. Y=number of schools (changes on based on number of schools), colored bar are different grade level.
- Walk through Dibels (replacing next year) – will be replaced by Lexia rapid, nwea map starting this year.
- Graduation rates are showing improvement but not changing the scores much.
- 5 year graduation is better than 4 year based on our scoring criteria. More normal curve.
- Achievement gap – very few schools scored on because of population groups not being adequate to make the comparison. 70% not included because not enough white and Asian students. Some special ed also left out so that decreases the numbers too.
- Colin has a problem with measuring the achievement gap that way. Within school comparison doesn't make sense (at least for the standard used in the comparison, combining groups is not a good way to do it).
- Craig – need a system-wide standard.
- Jake – student growth percentile is meant to get at this because a particular group is not improving at same rate.
- Dropout rate, most score 75 on dropout rate. Is this the right scoring criterion. This year looked at the percent of students that drop out. If between x and x, get 75 points, have to have 0 dropouts to get 100 points.
- Marinel – Suspects that we were not using cutoffs when originally designed metrics. Trying to avoid putting things into these baskets like doing now.
- SGP – using median, excluding some special ed students, looks at 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade because comparing to previous year. State is moving to mean SGP instead of median. We may want to adopt that for less confusion. Effect of outliers is represented by mean.
- Interpreting SGP findings - The scores are SQF points, no the SGP points
- Attendance is difficult to show the variability within because most students are in top 20%, so we report with points. Even though points are less clear, hard to use the % to show variability. Rebecca – if 100 points is 92%-100%, the highest score is 2 percentage points from chronic absence (90% or fewer of enrolled days attended).

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- We need to rethink our approach to scoring, it's not just a question of equitably assigning to schools, but really going for is accurately reflecting quality of schools. Without this, we don't even know if we are assigning students to schools equitably.
- Dr. Rose – the goal is quality, not just equity. We need to focus on quality compared to the assignment system.
- There has been a change in the ACCESS test – new standards for performance levels has had a detrimental impact on scores.
- Another interesting finding is around the percent of students enrolled in college within 16 months. You see a lot of schools scoring a hundred and a much smaller number of students are evenly distributed in the lower categories.
- When SQF was designed it was based on gap-having (halving?). Now doesn't work because now at 30% proficiency. Instead, we used state framework this year – setting incremental targets for schools. Based on scaled score rather than percent proficient so that's an improvement (more granularity vs forced into categories)
- This is the first year the State has rolled out these targets.
- Mark Racine – conversation about the 16 months enrolled, CTE targets. PIC data doesn't have apprenticeship with union and other vocational. Jake clarified that we used the National Student Clearinghouse data. Rebecca clarified that this does include vocational. How is Michelle Sylvaria measuring career readiness? Success Boston and Boston Opportunity? also have a measure.
- For the parent climate survey, need to have 30% response rate to be included, so for metrics that include parent questions, a lot of schools get left out. This is detrimental for schools that don't meet the 30% threshold.
- Marinel – we need to have a conversation about where state has made changes, where what we are finding isn't differentiating, and where other data points are in question because policy change, change in context, lessons learned.
- Is this level of complexity really informative to families
- Jake – we are analyzing the metrics so that we can bring information to the group and provide options... data changes that we need to adjust to (e.g., dibels) and improvements like including data on the Opportunity and Access Domain, etc.
- Marinel – new to consumer audience, not suggesting completely throw it out.
- Maybe using focus groups would be informative. Monica Roberts shared that she learned a lot during process at Mattahunt on home visits. Going to do something around understanding parent choice. Nobody looked at the data on from SQF – it didn't drive decision-making at all. Different family audiences think about it in different ways. How to make data more useful and accessible. What do people say is a quality school?
- Marinel – polling parents shows that they choose by what neighbor says, not this data.
- Group members attending has tended to be people who were around for the conception and development of the SQF framework. New folks haven't attended. Do they not feel that there is a way to have a quality engagement about these issues? Prior people invested because they helped design.

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- Dr. Coleman suggested that new membership should be brought on and given a group introduction meeting so they are oriented enough to contribute. Or some other way to orient people.
- Monica – we need to step back and consider how we can assess whether this is helpful, and if not, what should we do to make it useful?

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

*List full name, title, and affiliation, and a brief sentence summarizing testimony/topic.*

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 730 p.m. the School Quality Work Group II voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:

Name *Lisa Harvey*

Signature *Lisa Harvey*

Title *Deputy Director of Evaluation & Programs  
Office of Engagement*