



## Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius Engagement Tour

### Community Meeting: Haitian Community

**Date:** August 11, 2019

**Time:** 4-6 PM

**Location:** Kay Pam, 6 Livingstone Street, Dorchester Center 02124

**Notes:**

- Every child is capable of incredible rigor
- I want to help work towards ending child poverty
- Every child should college and career access
- Helping parents to work on/in our adult education programs
- **Core values:** Joy, Unity, Inclusion, Collaboration, Equity

**Overview of Haitian Community Concerns:**

- Hope to have a Sup't for at least five years
- 4 Categories of Haitian Community Concern
  - **A.) Representation**
    - We need to have Haitian educators and leaders in BPS
    - Outreach for key issues, part of decision making
  - **B.) Communication**
    - Long gaps in communication is an issue, need to have more frequent communication that's not crisis centered, need to have communication that reflects our culture
  - **C.) Achievement Gap**
    - More school choices and better programming for all especially students with special needs.
    - There are lots of students who go through BPS that don't come out prepared for life
    - STEM programs aren't being offered or aren't accessible to our students
    - Exams schools: BLS BLA, O'Bryant aren't accessible to our students because they aren't prepared for the entrance exams



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- Language gap
- **D.) Resources**
  - Budget doesn't reflect needs of our community
  - No safety or structure in schools, there's lots of police presence in some schools
  - ICE should not have access to our schools
  - BPS needs to reinforce relationship collaboration between grassroots orgs and larger companies
  - Students need pathways to become teachers
  - Hiring process communication so that we know what positions are vacant where there needs in BPS
  - Access to school technology, schools need up-to-date tech center

### Community Q&A

- **Q:** How many families do not have access to the technology/internet?
- **A:** Many parents are working more than one job and aren't home enough time to utilize the internet. Students in; Dorchester/Mattapan would benefit from Free Wifi
- **Q:** Music Education Health and Wellness Youth program provides music programming to youth since '98. Providing aid and resources to families affected by the earthquakes and families who are suffering from terminal illnesses... What is your top priority for BPS? How can you ensure BPS students will have the same opportunities as private schools students? How do you balance economics?
- **A:** Arts education is important, priority having high quality schools in every neighborhood, working on ways to create more equitable opportunities for students
- We'd like to see parents be a part of after school programs in lieu of language barriers. There's only one family service center that has Haitian-Creole speaking staff which every Haitian family is seeking
- **Q:** Are you incorporating financial literacy into your plan to respond to wealth gap?
- **A:** Yes



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- There's a gap in special needs support and making sure that teachers are able to work adequately with students
- Supporting victims of domestic violence, and provides adult and youth education resources...
- Students need resources to take and pass SAT's and standardized testing, are you looking to provide more SAT resources... private schools start in the freshman
- Several team members have met with college boards, would love for you (parents/community members) to be a part of the conversation with these college. We're also paying attention to testing to get into exams schools. 21<sup>st</sup> century learning grants, State of Mass must have 21<sup>st</sup> century learning grants. I can help to advocate for more support at the State level
- I love the focus on children but that's not always the case. Our concerns include office of English language learners mostly deal with compliance. **1.)** Teachers don't always feel like they get the support they need unless it is connected to DOJ compliance. Another issue is taking the test. **2.)** Lots of teachers are just passing a test and getting certification but they need to be assessed more thoroughly beyond that. We don't have enough psychologists that speak Haitian Creole and there aren't enough professional Social Emotional Support staff in for the schools, and too few staff eventually burnout. **3.)** Students who outgrow supports at the age of 22
- The scope of our work has shifted from education to advocacy given our current presidential administration. We're working with students (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade) who aren't certain about their citizenship and often don't qualify for certain services and resources. We are also working with sophomores on their college options for those who aren't sure how to navigate their college search. We're working with MIT in our efforts. We're so glad that you are going to be an advocate for us.
- **Q:** Where do you stand on issues between Charter schools?
- **Q:** I don't have a preference as long as it is a quality school
- **Q:** There are students who get suspended from schools (particularly SPED students) upwards of 45 days. IEP Services. We'd love to see BPS pay special attention to special needs students in public charter schools. We work



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wonderfully with the dual language program at the Toussaint school. That program means a lot to our community and we want it to succeed. Last year we traveled to Haiti to visit schools like ours. How can we support teacher exchanges so teachers can share in the experiences between the US and Haiti? How can Mattahunt? Can Toussaint become a City-Wide school so that other students across the city can access it?

- **Q:**What are your goals for improving Social emotional support? How are we determining what families are eligible for special needs services?
- College is wonderful but not everyone has the opportunity to attend, and we need to address summer learning loss and programs for young people who forget their program material over the summer months.
- **Q:** Social emotional needs. Health school mile (nurse in every single school, psychologists...). Would it help to have a bi-weekly address on video followed up by translated material in every language?
- **A:** Yes, and you'd have support of our ethnic media
- It would be great to have Haitian representation on the CE-Team.

### Community Meeting w/ Asian American Community

**Date:** August 14, 2019

**Time:** 6-8 pm

**Location:** VietAID, 42 Charles St, Dorchester

**Notes:**



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### Community Members Q&A

- **Parent:** My child will attend the VietAid UPK program through K-1, will my child be able to attend K-2 at the Murphy?
- **Monica:** We don't have pathways from UPK schools yet, we are still working on those pathways. In the future we do plan to have connectors to elementary schools.
- **Parent:** My kids live in an area that is far away from where they attend school (Harvard/Kent). And there are constant delays with buses so my kids are getting breakfast?
- **Grace W.:** There is language support at Harvard Kent, buses tend to run late because of Charles River and the construction that takes place on it. The traffic is also problematic
- **DC:** I'm glad you brought that problem to us we'll look into it [*referenced Green line from Reedville/Mattapan*]. As for breakfast we can work with schools Principals on making sure parents get their meals
- **Parent:** Previously it was said that Russell will go from K-2 to 6<sup>th</sup> is that going to happen? She wants to keep her through 6<sup>th</sup> grade then transition into an exam school
- **Grace:** That plan is delayed for another year, we're working on that now
- **Parent:** What's happening with McCormack
- **Monica:** McCormack is transitioning to 7-12, Russell
- **Parent:** Do you have plans on how to address violence in schools, we w
- **Dr. Cassellius:** Will work with our Chief of School Police and SELWEL and with Schools Sup't and work a plan to address this issue
- **Parent:** My 4 year old was wait-listed at the matter, she didn't realize that there was a pre-school program. Welcome Center should work more closely with our community organizations to help parents know what resources exist for



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pre-school/K-1

- **Monica: We**
- **Parent: Access programs, what's the criteria for how students are graded?**
- **Grace: They take an average and teachers look at an academic record, and then decide their level.**
- **DC: We can get your name and number and our ELL offices can follow-up with you. As a Minnesota transplant I'm still learning how students are assessed and become qualified for those services**
- **Parent: I'm from California, a lot of how I've learned how to maneuver through BPS is informal networking and local news with my first child in BPS. I was impressed with C2K it was very helpful. It would have been nice to have known about the UPK program, the rollout of that program was not very publicized.**
- **DC: We're hoping to be able to put together venues of communication especially since not every family has internet. The churches are an example of the outreach we are doing. We are glad to hear from you how we can better build a communication toolkit for families. We also just got funding from the Mayor and an increased budget to push our information out, and should be in the languages needed.**
- **BPS School Guidance Director: How do we ensure each of our schools has culturally competent staff and have a proactive strategy to dealing with student crises.**
- **DC: We will continue to build relationships with social workers and school staff to respond to these issues**
- **Parent: My daughter is attending an exam school, she's older and doesn't really share info with. What can we do to ensure EL parents are**
- **Parent: Creating more connection between the City and BPS. In what year will the transition for school reconfiguration be completed. What are plans to improve mental support due to stress and heavy workload, how do you plan to involve community health centers and health professionals as resources? Sensitivity trainings for BPS employees throughout the district not just at the school**



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level.

- **DC; Neighborhood liaisons are a great idea/resource, the city's ONS is working with us on our Staturday registrations. No answer on the reconfiguration around Build BPS, I want to make sure there's an equity lens on that situation. BTU has been really helpful in helping to secure school nurses and psychologists and providing wrap-around service. My own son had issues and with depression and so I know the value of having those services available to families. Equity and resources: what do we consider as basic needs for students to have quality education? I'm learning how our budget works. If there's an area (say art, science, social studies) we need to think about what some of the student population has so that everyone can have access to those services. We're looking at what is a high quality education for HS students so that they're prepared for professional world or military service. We have to treat people the we ourselves want to be treated and we need to more around cultural competency and I regret what happened regarding the flyer that went out**
- **Parent: Can we open more programs and classes for**
- **DC; I'm not familiar with program. I hope we can do a lot without summer school, we have a wonderful 5<sup>th</sup> quarter summer schools program**
- **Student: I worked in Chinatown this summer, we saw infographic that basically shows how "white" BLS is comparison to other schools. How can we address that diverse bodies of students are having access to quality schools like ours**
- **DC: We want to work with students very intentionally and make sure schools are welcoming to all students, we will also visit more schools and determine how to make schools more available to**
- **Parent: I really like that VietAid is provide dual language programs and that my child. What about having a K-2 Vietnamese dual-language schools. Before it's at this age that kids can absorb their native languages. For example, the Murphy School is been good with working with Vietnamese parents.**
- **DC: In Minneapolis students must receive seal on their diplomas upon graduating with. Dual-language should be a graduation requirement**

Community Partners Q&A



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- **E.L. Parent Taskforce:** Thanks for coming to meet with us. One of our biggest concerns has been services for special needs students and immigrants with special needs. I'm glad to hear that you [Sup't] will have offices directly under your supervision that respond to the needs of these students.
- **Dr. Cassellius:** These are areas that need tremendous amount of attention. We'll be looking at these needs over the next 6-12 month. I also plan to work with the EL task force in Gen. Ed. settings. I believe in Bilingual education it is an asset, and should be celebrated within our schools.
- **Mass Asian-American Educators Alliance/BTU:** Staff at schools needing for more Asian American educators in the district as the students population is 8-9% and Asian-American teachers rep less than 6% throughout district. In some schools there's zero Asian-American teachers.
- **DC:** I totally agree we need more diversity within our schools regarding staff and leadership. We'll be working with school leaders on the selection process to reflect that diversity.

### Dr. Cassellius Closing:

- I am working hard alongside Monica and the leadership team to continually receive feedback from the community
- We will be connecting with ethnic print, and broadcast media to push out our information
- Thank you for participating and being present



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### Community Meeting: East Boston Community with EBECC

**Date:** August 19, 2019

**Time:** 6-7:30 PM

**Location:** Bremen Park, East Boston

**Notes:**

**Community Members Q&A**

- What's happening with BuildBPS and the proposed school reconfiguration/expansions this year in East Boston? It's important for parents to make informed decisions based on what's happening with Build BPS.
- I don't have enough information at this time as I'm just starting but be on the lookout for more information
- BPS needs to work on its translations/communication, I received robo-call about a school meeting and messaging was unclear (O'donnell School)
- What extra measures are taken for student safety given the climate of what's happening around the country (i.e. school shootings among other issues)?
- We're meeting with school leaders and families to determine what schools safety needs exist. School doors being numbered and working with school security safety to see what other measures can be taken.
- How will you address the challenges of students who travel far to get to school from their neighborhoods?
- The assignment system is something I want to look as it pertains to distance traveled by students. Tonight is part of our listening session, but following this meeting we will be doing more strategic planning and I really need community input because it's important. We're working with small community organizations and developing focus groups to give input as well. Some of our leadership team lives in E. Boston. and can provide insight into the needs of the community.
- I've frequently experienced transportation issues, no one is being accountable. In fact I've never gone a year or even a month without transportation issues. Who will be held accountable for long wait times or school buses that don't show up. I know other families from East Boston and Charlestown who've experienced wait times of an hour or more.
- I will look into the issues of long waits for buses and phone calls



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- Umana Barnes & East Boston HS 1.) wants more communication around special needs accommodations 2.) What is in your plan to address Black and brown students' achievement gaps
- We're looking to create more opportunities regarding achievement gaps by improving curriculum. We want to help parents understand how we're providing EL services, how we're assessing students, and assessing teachers' abilities to teach diverse bodies of students. We're looking into utilizing additional mental health services and exploring improved arts and other programs for students.
- 1.) How can families reach out to you directly? 2.) I had a problem without BPS assessed students for EL, the process is terrible and parents were unaware of student placements.
- What is your plan to assist students with special needs?
- We work with parents on individual plans. We also have a task force that works with our SPED and inclusion programs. Since I've just begun I'm still working to understand what programs and services already exist and then working on how to improve them. I want to hear from parents, students, and community members, and gather as much feedback as we can.
- What are you most excited about, what challenges do you anticipate?
- I'm most excited about working with students including our BSAC representatives.
- Student shares his internship experience with Dr. Cassellius
- My biggest challenge is finding some of the inequities that exist in the district figuring how to best respond to those issues. We have wonderful school staff, school leaders, central office staff who want to see the best for your students.
- As an EL parent my biggest challenge is helping with homework (math specifically) and not being able to help my child.
- Looking into help Parent University homework help especially in subjects like math or it would be a good idea to establish a program like that.
- EBECC can help respond to those issues or lead you to a resource
- We're concerned about daughter reading below her reading level, not being challenged enough. Seems to be a serious lack will to improve these challenges on behalf of the school staff. It's also possible for students to go 2-3 years w/o Phys. Ed. or art.



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### SPC Meeting: East Boston & Charlestown

**Date:** September, 12, 2019

**Time:** 6-7:30 PM

**Location:** Charlestown High School, 240 Medford St, Charlestown, MA 02129

**Notes:**

Why is there such significant disparities in BPS?

-What do we need to do to be parents 1st choice? If we don't have high quality school then parents won't pick it. What do we consider high quality school? what is the foundational effort and resources at every school to be high quality, but first we need to get to that agreement and language.

What are the non-negotiables, interested in hearing feedback about the decision made by school site councils, that don't have the resources to implement. She's still trying to impact, is this from student weighted funding, -high quality schools you need PE, art, Music and other extra curriculums.

What is the plan to meet the needs of Charlestown for students K-1 who have not received seats, schools are overcrowded is there a plan to use the upper school of HK or WP to create more K-1 and K-2 schools?

There's no plan. Dr. C wants the pause on BuildBPS. If there wasn't a shovel in the ground then it is still open for discussion. Wants to understand BuildBPS more until she gets into every school, walk building and facilities to see what is possible before making decisions.

- it's going to be a growing problem, and the population in Charlestown will continue to grow over the next 10 years
- BPS has to meet with demographer re: housing, the needs for school age children,
- Waiting list-how can the waitlist be more transparent and accurate so that families have more info to make major life decisions
- Want to hear how to fix the broken system, what ideas do people have around making a fairer process



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- Real time updates, log-on with deadlines with confirming and denying an assignment, and real time decisions. How do you feel about holding a spot for 8 days? It's there for a reason and they are entitled, visibility to see who is on the wait-list. Not even getting a placement until the end of May by the time . sense of anxiety for parents who want to decide if they are going to take spot, or if they are going to choose private schools.
- Is it transparent to families that a school in EB has 16 open K-1 spots, so they could fill their spots.
- Wants to be clearer regarding the waitlist , families have a set school -how do we showcase our schools to better market and see the benefits of other schools.
- Lottery in a public schools , is it really something parents want or if we've done this for so long we can't undo it
  
- Students who are in one family and go to multiple schools. Housing uncertainty, Cultural capital to have their voices be heard and to navigate the system,
- Transportation are a symptom of the assignment system, the inclusion models, and sub-separate issues. Pressure to fill the seats for other schools, because if seats are full then teachers and staff suffer.
- BuildBPS pathways and know what for teachers and parents to expect. Less variable because parents will want to remain in the pathway.
- The buses for late start times are a mess. Sometimes not getting there until 10:30/11am. And equity issues-ESL parents don't know how to speak up.
- There are others speaking up for you. There are challenges, although we are improving it's not up to par. 98% of buses are getting students to school within 30 mins. I'm getting to the bottom of it. Monitors on buses for the 1:1 need to be unpacked.
- **Q:** How can we make sure that the where's my bus app is working? What are we doing to ensure that the buses are taking the most efficient route?
- **A:** When there's a cover bus the app doesn't work. Added a messaging feature. Late registration come and they needed to be added and changed to accommodate late registration. Saturday registration were in place to try and get parents in earlier but 300-500 people registered in the first few days of kids (3k late registrations).
- They would send their students there if they could see. People don't really know how great our schools are.



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- Lives in the West End-there are no walkable schools. We'd have to build one or figure out where to put one.
- Bringing the schools up to par boils down to access, and bringing schools up to quality. So that there are quality schools in every neighborhood, and people will choose the school across the street.
- Housing patterns are equitable, so how do you craft a plan so that theirs equity for everyone, that doesn't privilege some over others.
- Suggestions: Schools tend to be larger more than half are single track schools, schools that are so small are hard to fund.
- **Q:** Will family engagement liaison be funded at every school?
- **A:** If she had the resources to deal with transportation, truancy, and academics. You can go to the school and register in the system.

Would you consider having a parent liaison who understands deeply the issues of particular neighborhoods, to speak on behalf of a community. Exploring if this is a model that would work for Boston. Cautious that she doesn't want to disenfranchise other orgs and people.

- **Q:** How can decrease excessive wait times for transportation and welcome centers?
- **A:** having difficulting resolving problem which makes the. Communications-wants to take a deep dive into longer term goals. Short term-routing and contracting with staff, and communications, how to we communicate internally and then communicate with schools and buses. All have to be unpacked and find solutions.
- **Q:** Because Edwards is closing, where will we send our kids? How can BPS work to provide families with services that charter schools are providing?
- In the definition of high quality schools. Going to take a few years to get there. How do parents want that to come out? Parents being willing to be apart of the solutions, and how school leaders are allocating their resources. How are schools spending the money they have?
- **Q:** How do you feel about supporting social and emotional?
- **A:** Impact on students are busing, valuing the bus monitors and drivers are the 1st people they see. Improving work culture is apart of delering students happy, on time and safely to our school building. Strong and well staffed SELWELL.
- Received a 40K to go to NYC and see how they provide HUB schools. Highest needs populations.



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- EFA and advance work: declining enrollment for advance work and like EFA. Evaluating the pilot.
- **Q:** Is there a collab between the BPDA and the Charlestown redevelopment process. Looking at the pathway. Not fair to middle schools to just be out in limbo, so she needs to
- **A:** Supt to do tours of other schools in other neighborhoods. So parents can see what the other options are, especially EB Schools.



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### Community Meeting with BEJA

**Date:** September 19, 2019

**Time:** 6-8pm

**Location:** Saint Stephen's Youth Center

**Notes:**

- We need more teachers in our schools that represent the communities of students they serve
- At what point will BPS work on certification for teachers to improve instruction quality?
- Blackstone's open door classroom structure disrupts student learning and is a safety concern.
- **Blackstone Parent:** Have you thought of any solutions to transportation issues?
- How can we work with tax exempt institutions and use their exemptions build our schools?
- BuildBPS @ McCormack: **1.)** Will BBPS ensure McCormack families, BCLA, Harbor Point Task Force, and other community orgs can have input on school design? **2.)** How do we keep the City from building on the McCormack's open space?
- How can we ensure that teachers are being **a.)** certified **b.)** evolving their teaching methods?



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- **Sub Teacher:** More support needed regarding conflicts with students... I was attacked by a student who then accused me of attacking them, which could affect my license and other credentials.
- **BuildBPS 1.)** Has swing space been considered? **2.)** Do you, Dr. Cassellius, that believe BBPS is transparent process? **3.)** Will you ask for moratorium until there's multi stakeholder input?
- **Blackstone & Tobin Parent:**
  - 1.) What initiatives do you have in mind for security of the Blackstone school? I'm concerned about adult activity taking place at the nearby playground
  - 2.) My daughter in high school wanted to exam school, but struggled with the entrance exam and is discouraged, why does she have to take an exam?
- **Hernandez Parent:** at BPS central office top heavy it, those resources could be put to better use in our schools
- **Sumner parent:** Please consider gentrification when considering neighborhood assignment and housing
- **Blackstone Parent & Parent Mentor:** My son is discouraged at how other schools have sports and other resources and his school's pool is closed.
- **Blackstone Parent:** My child was assigned to another school but loves the Blackstone. I had to sign a document permitting the reassignment and not being able to receive transportation.
- What can you do to promote that K-8 students have uniforms across the district? It's difficult and expensive to buy regular clothes and sometimes I worry about some girls wearing age-appropriate attire.
- Lots of undocumented parents don't speak up out of fear -how can we uplift thier voices?
- Whenever we go to School Committee meeting there's no childcare.
- What's your vision of what every school should have in terms of baseline education?
- BPS needs to be mindful of various language dialects regarding translation
- Schools need help engage the broader community about gathering resources in the area The Blackstone did a 4-mile radius search to find field opportunities within walking distance from school.
- Improve parent & BPS admin relationships
- More transparency needed about BPS disciplinary policy



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- I'm at Charter school and my BPS peers feel as though they're education will not prepare them to complete in the real world
- My high school peers and I want to attend the climate strike and we think a class about climate change should be built into the curriculum.
- At Latin Academy some students aren't doing well due to lack of resources or disruptive home environment, how can you help?
- What is the policy behind schools getting Advanced Work Curriculum?
- How will you address academic rigor and equity in curriculum across schools?
- **Sumner parent:** We have EFA pilot there's tension between our schools and others because it doesn't feel like an equitable academic experience in comparison to schools with AWC's.
- I believe student athlete GPA's need to be higher than 1.67 to participate.
- Rosie's Place is a partner in up to 55 schools and ultimately strive to be in all BPS schools. We invite you, Dr. Cassellius to visit our offices and learn how we can be a resource.
- There needs to be more investment in the arts from BPS which can be conducive in students mathematical comprehension and well-roundedness
- BPS needs to advocate for more diverse therapy in public schools
- We need Fed regulation around students being discriminated against because of language, race, or ability. Have a support for students with illiteracy, they have to *fail* in order to receive help.
- Let's ensure that students who test out of SPED have an adequate curriculum so they don't return to SPED/remedial courses.
- What initiatives will you promote to improve the roles of homeless liaison in the schools?
- I would suggest implementing a no-eviction policy for students

### Dr. Cassellius Responses

- I will hold back some resources in the budget to ensure equity for our students and staff
- Security: I noticed playground I didn't have gate so I'm inquiring about gates (Orch Garden, Mason and others. We recently made banners hanging on Mass Ave near OG that say "Keep me safe, this is where I play."
- I am working to create high quality schools in all neighborhoods and maintaining school rigor.



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- BuildBPS/Maintenance: I've committee to the reconfiguration, but I do want to slow the process in places otherwise
- Students can attend climate without penalty
- Is there a way to setup an email to gather community feedback?
- Utilizing exit interviews to be helpful determining to do that work going forward.
- Partnerships are a huge part of a HUB school model and I'm looking at grant writer position. For example: Comcast working to provide low cost or no-cost Wifi for students who don't have it
- Air quality and maintenance will be taken into account for Build BPS
- Curriculum Rigor/ Access / EFA / AWC are all being looked at by the Chief of Academics. Hope to develop a model for all of district. I'm still learning about school autonomy and school selecting their own curriculum
- SPED Disproportionality:
- Literacy: UPK and Head Start partnerships will be helpful.
- Homeless Liaisons: Looking into more support, social worker staffing.
- I have no problem fighting for money, and I'll look for your partnership.

### **FACILITIES (BUILD BPS) / TRANSPORTATION / STAFF SUPPORT**

- need more teachers in our schools.
- transportation issues need resolution
- need guidance on partnering with nonprofits and tax-exempt organizations on grants/funding

### **EQUITY & ACCESS / TRANSPARENCY / SCHOOL SAFETY**

- **Blackstone & Tobin Parent:**
- Security is an issue for some schools in the neighborhood
- Concerned about activity in playgrounds
- Consider gentrification when considering neighborhood assignment
- Promote K-8 students have uniforms?
- School Committee meetings should provide childcare.

### **CURRICULUM / STUDENT SUPPORT**

- academic rigor and curriculum needs to be equitably distributed across schools.
- Need to provide equitable distribution of AWC's across all schools.
- There needs to be more investment in the arts from BPS which can be conducive in students mathematical comprehension and well-roundedness.



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- ensure that students who test out of SPED have an adequate curriculum so they don't return to SPED/remedial courses

### SPC Meeting: Mattapan & Hyde Park

**Date:** September 18th, 2019

**Time:** 6-7:30pm

**Location:** Mattapan Health Center

**Notes:** Fundraising- Looking at ways to increase fundraising at both the school and district level

Technology lacking in schools, no computers, no technology to prepare students for higher learning

Dr. Cassellius would like to expand the comcast opportunities for technology and internet in every student home.

Different start times with before school-big issue as a parent in terms of need before/after school programming that is affordable for parents.

-District has tried in the past, time before and after school, it's more than start time. Issues and problems are systematic and school starts are important, but there's more at the root of the issue.

Assignment system is at the core of high quality schools and school choice.

#### **Transportation**

-Alternative transportation is a neg -1, the transportation process needs to be improved.

-Taylor School Parent: The bus never shows up and if you call you are on hold a very long time and often get no answers to your questions.



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Would like information regarding 2-year free tuition at community colleges especially for immigrant students.

There is a need for scholarships for Mattapan schools and for young people that are undocumented. There is a need Free community college for all BPS students.

Lack of engagement with parents and teachers due to CORI-parents need CORI to volunteer, how does that affect the child and community? How do we do a better job and being more therapeutic and thinking about the whole student?

-Are there any plans to integrate mental health or well being in BPS as a regular system, for all students? Emotional regulation? That would benefit all students.

ELC don't have pathways to other schools. How can we alleviate the stress parents feel when they have to leave there ?

More symptoms of the assignment system, that we need to address city wide.

PA Shaw Parent: There is little to no technology at my child's school. They need more interactive expression and more hands on activities. Mattapan community is overlooked. Advance work classes aren't an option for our students, what message does that send to our black/brown and immigrant students?

What are the plans for pathways for K-8? Parents want to keep their students in BPS but are worried a placement.

Why is there only 1 montessori school in the whole city?

Students need more support as they are transitioning out of BPS. Especially undocumented students. Financial aid for undocumented students and don't have access to funds for college because of their status?How do they access it?

How do you plan on improving test scores of mattapan schools?  
Expanding rigor, parents, and resources.



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How can we make our community safe from bullying?

All hands on deck and make community more safe. Using the Mayor and commissioner Gross and BPD to help children get out of cycles of violence through programming and through schools. Education is the best tool.

Funding between charter schools and public schools?

Teacher representation matters students and families want to see more teachers and school leaders who look like them, specifically African-American.

There is a real lack of cultural competency among young white teachers who are teaching students of color

Punitive schools feed to prison pipeline-how will BPS begin to adjust it's policies and practices to stop making these issues worse?

Curriculum is not culturally sensitive or relevant to many students. The lack of black teachers who can adapt curriculum to black students hurts black students in the classroom.

What kind of recourse do we have to hold you up?Are you committed to coming back and reporting?

BSAC- proposed admin code of conduct- attempted to get student voted position on the School Committee, is this something you will support?

School Police have no way to ensure that students and teachers are safe. What is your plan to ensure safety in schools?

Dr. Cassellius is not a proponent of guns in schools for any reason. There are other measure of deescalation techniques that need to be used, and each school should have a safety plan with the community in place. It is surprising to see that to see we have 75 police and not enough school counselors.

Are we going to revisit or readpt standardized testing?

Dr. Casllius notes she would like to look into reducing test and increasing instruction time.



## Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius Engagement Tour

### Community Meeting: Somali & ACEDONE

**Date: September 30, 2019**

**Time: 6-8 PM**

**Location: Bolling Building**

- Need schools based staff that speak or are Somali especially... Hennigan school has a huge Somali population where parents are respected and acknowledged unfortunately there's not a HS with a similar environment and services
- We need more Somali staff and teachers in our schools.
- School based staff need to be culturally competent
- There's a real need to build parent capacity and trust
- Change of leadership is always an issue for us in terms of long term relationship with BPS leadership
- There's a lack of communication between parents and students, I have an interest in heritage and dual language programming to help kids understand and learn culture
- Parents don't know about IEP services nor is it being explained properly by BPS
- Food in school is not great and we cannot bring food because their peers are allergic (cinnamon, fish/shellfish)- how is this culturally competent?
- Kids behavior is prejudged, constant communication between DSS and parents are wrongfully blamed for student behavior about... parents being investigated unfairly and unjustly
- Some of these issues have been taking place for the last 10-20 years, language barriers create issues for parents to understand or receive services which trickles down to student needs not being addressed
- Prayer time concerns- schools don't create time and space for students to pray
- No facilities for washing-also culturally incompetent

*[Concerns presented by: Youth of Ubuntu Project / Center to Support Immigrant Organizing]*

- Youth Participation Action Research Project: we discuss academic, economic, and other areas of advocacy. We've discovered that Massachusetts has one of the highest rate of hate crimes against Muslims in the country.
- We are in need of:



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- A letter of support for our research project
- A chance to connect with all HS Principals, Office of Accountability, & BSAC
- Be able to post flyers on the BPS website to promote
- You Should know:
  - Federal surveillance campaign that started in 2014 and it unfairly targets Islamic communities and people of color in general... it increases path to deportation/prison pipeline
  - **Example: Youth Police Initiative Plus (via BPD)** targets Somali, Muslim students (boys in particular)
  - Depart of Homeland Sec gave BPD \$500,000 grant which helped to launch the **Youth Police initiative Plus**

### Dr. Cassellius Responses

- Special Education: I am currently working with our SPED Dir to look at services on IEP and how we deliver them, and so that there's better communication, and there should be an interpreter
- Training: parent training is a good idea to help build parent advocates especially on issues like that an IEP, we can do trainings in Somali
- K-12 Pathways: Part of our strategic plan,
- Having a diverse workforce, having more Somali work personnel is a value that our School committee has expressed, and I continue to look for ways to diversify our workforce. We should be connecting with Somali with media, places of worship, or other means of connecting with the community. Making sure parents have access to adult education program like Madison Park's Boston Central Adult High School
- We're really interested in dual language to retain their language and culture, it's something we've heard from various communities, I like the idea of heritage classes. Spoke with social studies teachers in HS about developing ethnic studies classes
- DSS issues: I'm learning about how those services work. We need to make sure to educate teachers on respond to ... home visits are an effective way for families and teachers to connect if they suspect that something is wrong with a student. "Islamophobia" is something that we want to get to the bottom of it about training and about principal leadership
- I will look into the issue of food and get a better understanding of restrictions
- Wants to gather more info about this federal surveillance issue



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### Community Meeting: Boston Faith-based Leaders

**Date: October 1, 2019**

**Time: 5:30-7pm**

**Location: Bolling Building**

- Like Model of JUICE What ways would you advise orgs that are faith-based orgs
- Please share your vision for autonomy and the direction of school autonomy
- Thank you for your vision and efforts for high standards and quality in schools-many yrs collaborating with schools. Ministry and Foundation for the school district and looking forward to collaborating with you.
- Door knocking for kids with absentee kids-no follow up. Lots of depression as major reason for absenteeism
- Want to provide help for the community, but school and community hesitant about partnering and engaging with schools.
- Expanding the dual language programs-currently have 1 in Mattapan for Haitian Creole
- Bible Study Club before or after school, but getting push back
- Madison Park is the only Vocational Ed HS in the district-what's plan to expand these as options
- What's your plan with all of the data that you're collecting?
- Culture will lead to strategy
- How are you going to have an organizational structure to optimize your strategy in a culturally competent way?
- How can we be more helpful to you in messaging and getting the word out, especially for collaboration?



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- As a practical step you suggest we work with the school nearest us. What's the 1 value that you would recommend that we promote?
- Children's Sabbath- October 18th - 20th. It would be wonderful if we chose a Sunday to celebrate together?
- One world program in the summer. Work with different cultural communities... Philanthropic programs in Boston-What's the best way to offer these resources to you and your BPS staff to share?
- Equity of Fundraising

### **DR. CASSELLIUS RESPONSES**

- Those that are closest to the church -reach out to them
- I'll be going out and asking for partners
- We'll be reaching out as part of All Hands on Deck
- Chronic attendance issue -18days= Need support with door-knocking. Need to have clergy provided with talking points. Outreaching early to students with 3-5 days absences
- Several Partners by doing asset mapping and leveraging those partners
- Late registration is an issue-we need kids in school on Day 1
- Churches do a lot of social services -so thank you for that and also thank you for filling up students' souls with JUICE
- Vision-Speed dating type of event where schools with needs are matched with organization who can meet their needs
- Looking for autonomy, but also want to be able to address all their mandated needs as well as their goals for their particular school community
- Want to have high quality stds developed in Central that are pushed out
- Needs more \$ to square autonomy
- Kids asking for help with depression. Hearing this from all across the district. We need to address this issue
- Looking at individual attendance issues and school based issues as well to address
- At present we are at 94.+ attendance in the district and if you dig in you'll notice that there are individual schools that aren't doing well
- Joy -bringing my best self to work everyday and trying to be positive. Joy is much more spiritual. It's the culture and Ethos of a school. I want to feel it!
- Chittick example. Teachers bringing it every day! Same with Bradley, Otis
- Guidance and training for schools and community to engage with clergy



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- Hired two school principals from the Hurley and the Hernandez Schools to be on Sr. Leadership team which also includes Elia Brugerman who will work on this and treat dual language as an asset
- Trying to get a better sense of the faith based protocol in the district and understanding what the potential is
- Vocational Ed needs expansion. Career exploration and career technology needs to be at fore-front of core curriculum and redesign. Need to look at Madison and Timilty and RCC -natural innovation and collaboration waiting to happen. Business community wanting to partner as well
- Moratorium on the school testing, except at the state level. Unfair to test when haven't taught what's on the test, never been given the content that's actually being measured. The damage that we do to children is unnecessary 8K children tested and only 58 opted for Advanced Work
- The notes will be processed and distributed in a transparent manner
- Fundraising now for a Consultant. Leadership Playbook for principles and hiring a consultant for culturally competent strategy implementation
- Deep inequities in our system. Ready to walk in it. Walk in it we must do!
- Preach on JOY and do a whole sermon on the JUICE. Joy is so important to promote.
- Update to 11K individuals at the BPS and the Check in could be shared with all of you. We can post them for all of you as well.
- 1 ask =bring in the Joy and bring in the JUICE
- Monica will get contact for the philanthropic org that wants to share/partner with the BPS vision
- Still need to get to synagogues and Mosques as well.



## Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius Engagement Tour

### Central Office Staff Brown Bag Lunch

**Date:** October 2nd, 2019

**Time:** 12-1 PM

**Location:** Bolling Building-Central Office Staff Lunch

**High Level Report Out Notes:**

Exploring the use of equity and inclusion. The concept of strong leadership could be changed, exploring other words Collaborative in place of "strong" in regards to leadership.

Needing to work to define vision of a quality school in order to try to make the vision come to fruition.

Goals were too broad they need narrowing.

Buildings Matter -Excellent infrastructure-impact students how they learn, and if parents choose the school-buildings that need updating and those schools can improve.

Equitable resource allocation-some schools need more, than other school- How do we bridge that gap and how do we ensure resources are spread equally in terms of needs.

Changing "Improve school quality and student outcomes" to "Excellent school quality and excellent student outcomes" or "improve greatly" and adding other adjectives to where the district should be will help us not only envision better outcomes and reach for greatness and not just improvement.

From Central Office perspective there needs to be greater inter departmental collab and greater understanding of others roles and responsibilities.

Improving interdepartmental collaboration by not just meeting to meet but to have targeted goals, and actions to materialize tangible outcomes.

It's important for Central Office to understand other peoples' jobs and responsibilities transportation as an example. "You cannot be what you cannot see". Need to understand one another jobs and roles.



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Tense and rigorous conversation amongst colleagues regarding the goals and aspirations.

The concept of standardized communication-what type of communication? what degree and what levels? And how do you standardize communication?

The need for more community investment vs. involvement and one is often weighted more than the other

For example edvest and other groups invest money, but cultural groups want to be involved.

There is a real need for **stability** around resource qualification and allocation, school based curriculum, stability in leadership hurts central office. For example many projects are moving for help improve quality and then when leadership changes project start over

Core training around support for schools and central office staff in order to support schools

Wondering if there is a way to create more fluidity around how these goals are prioritized and how do we orient these goals. It's crucial to have multilingual staff, trauma informed care both in central office and in schools.

Increasing autonomous schools is a topic of conversation, both the benefits and challenges. It is challenging when schools are using their own programming and curriculum. Leadership attrition numbers and starting from scratch over and over again. School leaders need more support and are best equipped to lead schools.

Autonomy- With a focus on the HOW, it would be great if we can narrow our focus on vision we how are we getting there? how are we aligning resources for those goals-people time and money? what do we mean by school quality? What are we going to stop doing to align resources?

We NEED Central office staff to believe that schools are the agent of change, then we all need to believe that so it will trickle down to school.

Goals Feedback: Afterschool and before school activities for students, should be free and available to all. Limited and less transitions for schools. K-6, 7-12 model and pathways for parents.



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More MTEL support for diverse workforce for teachers, specifically teachers of color. Better collaboration with DESE around increasing educators/leaders of color.

Wrap around services for K0.

Explicit expectations for school based leadership, family engagement, cohesive vision for teachers and central office staff.

Goals are interconnected with one another. Want to see more detail and unpacking. Greater community investment for example? What does that mean?

Missing: Improve student support structures - what do students who need SE/College Career/ and what does the ecosystem of services look like?

What does the coaching model for practitioners look like for teachers and educators? Better coordinated support across the board. More therapeutic professionals in schools to support social and emotional health.

### **Brown Bag Lunch Breakout Session Notes Continued:**

#### **1} Are these the right strategic goals? What is missing? Is there anything that we should remove?**

Look good

Diversity bullet did not go unnoticed by RCD

Goals are very broad, encompass/cover a lot of areas.

Question that comes up, How do we define quality?

What do student outcomes look like?

Are we collecting data around autonomy. Data and beneficial results...

Questions about increased autonomy. What does this mean?

What is the level of accountability for the autonomous school?

Paramount to establish the district leadership mission and vision.

How does district leadership support school leadership to reduce attrition?

How do we help school leadership meet the challenges of their school community?

Balance of school leadership role.

Alignment of resources and of mission (eg. curriculum) is key. Defining the how and showing



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them how to get there (human, academic, material resources, time as a resource.  
What do we do with autonomy as it relates to school quality and resource allocation?  
Earned autonomy? Guardrails?

Clearer goals around student inclusion and outcomes for students with disabilities.  
Goals include strong district leadership and should include strong school leadership.  
Generally current goals are quite broad, not measurable.  
Prioritize diversity in goal setting.  
How are we measuring progress towards these goals?  
Add and measure better: Family Engagement  
Higher importance on resources needed.

All interconnected-one cannot be accomplished without the other.  
Missing improved student support structures.  
Social, emotional supports/wraparound/ecosystem.  
School and teacher support needs to be coordinated. What's the coaching model?  
Coordinated support systems  
Need to unpack each goal

School-based leadership missing.  
What is community investment?  
Parents especially invested  
What do we mean by school quality?

Establishing Standardized communication  
Clarify greater community investment to include involvement.  
What outcomes define quality?  
Stability for resource allocation  
Removing unrestricted autonomy for schools

Missing Equitable?  
Use of words Equity & Inclusion in goals.  
Reflective/Collaborative-use of stronger words  
Need to define Vision of quality school in BPS

Goals are very broad and cover many things  
Additions: Excellent Infrastructure. Buildings/Infrastructures need updating as a stand alone goal, since it affects everything else.  
Changes: Equitable instead of effective resource allocation.



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Excellent school quality  
Excellent student outcomes

### **Breakout Session:**

**2} Based on these areas, what types of programs, opportunities and support is needed to fulfill your vision of quality schools?**

Before school programs as priority  
Limited or less transitions for students (K-6, 7-12)  
MTEL Support for candidates  
Serious discussion with DESE about reciprocity  
Increased wrap around services in our early ed

Vision around models based on the size of school  
Non negotiables schools need to follow and accountability, systems and structure  
Rigor and culture and linguistically sustaining practices  
Civic engagement and literacy in the mission and the vision  
Continuity around credit attainment

Accountability checks for autonomy  
Leadership support  
Clear communication of the district leadership instructional vision and goals and the development of systems to support the initiatives. Coordination of supports to all schools.  
School leadership support

School Quality definition. (People, time, money)  
Competing priorities. What do we stop doing?  
Are resources aligned to this definition?  
Does it align to school quality framework?  
What can we stop doing?  
How to calibrate what works and communicate that we should focus on that?  
Calibrate and communicate often

Increase bilingual/multilingual staffing in schools  
Maybe we require bilingual CFCs in many schools with a threshold population  
Increase language learning at earlier grade levels  
Trauma informed practices and approaches to discipline  
Increase art instruction and access to Art, Music, Gym/PE



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Is there a rhetorical question implied about balance of these needs with instructional time?  
College, career, and life skills for all of our students

Coaching

Therapeutic professionals

Everyone has ownership of these goals

How does each stakeholder plug-in

How does business fit in, rather than we fit into business?

Sustainability

CCLR

PD for education-cohesive vision-alignment

Temperature gage-timely adjustments to the strategic plan

Improved data systems and vision framing system

Stability for resource allocation

Stability in curriculum

Stability in leadership

Core training for central office liaisons to support schools with...

Need to define vision of quality schools within BPS

Support

Greater inter-departmental collaboration

Targeted cross functional goals

Not meeting to meet, but accomplishing something as a team

Support for all struggling students

Opportunities

To learn about each other's jobs

To understand each other's work

Multilingual multicultural staff

More welcome centers for families in neighborhoods

Equitable entry into schools (eg. Madison Park)

Programs

Dual language

We need this explicitly in the plan!



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### Community Meeting: Cape Verdean Community

**Date:** October 6th, 2019

**Time:** 12:30-2pm

**Location:** Saint Peter's Teen Center

**Notes:**

#### **OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

- I'm 15 years old at the Burke, why doesn't school start later?
- Orchard Garden middle school student, why does Middle School not have school buses? ... There's a long commute for students trying to travel from Orchard Gardens to Dorchester via public transportation
- Student: will the Dearborn become a charter school? [Answer: No]
- What are your next steps and your commitments Dr. Cassellius?

#### **STAFF & PROGRAM DIVERSITY and INCLUSION**

- More support is needed for immigrant students in traveling with limited Visa benefits Do we have programs that support Student Visas financially?
- Orchard Gardens, LGF have not CV teachers & speakers... we need more mental health support K-12, also for teachers who are over worked... need more than one social worker in each location

#### **EQUITY, OPPORTUNITY & ACCESS FOR STUDENTS**

- CV Students have a right to a dual language program, we notice other communities and ethnicities do as
- Equitable programs, for CV SLIFE students, including some with disabilities, BPS needs to get more CV teachers and staff to advocate for our families, having CV liaisons in our schools



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- **Let's invest more in the arts including theater arts, it helps students to learn things like math and other subjects**
- **Families can't afford rent so they go other neighborhoods outside of the district and have to readjust to a new environment where they may not be supported as well as before**
- **Uniforms will address issues around insecurities not having the right or "the best" clothes amongst peers**
- **Student: Why can't Orchard Gardens playgrounds be kept clean from dirty needles?**
- **Student: Why did I get put into a school far away from home?**
- **Student: Orchard Gardens doesn't offer soccer, and elective schedules are too long**
- **Student: Why doesn't BPS have the same opportunities as schools not within BPS?**
- **Student: Why do ESL students need to take the same MCAS as native English speaker?**

### **ACADEMIC RIGOR AND STUDENT SUPPORT**

- **There are strong mental health concerns within our students, thank you Dr. Cassellius for being willing to share your personal story with us**
- **Students are facing concerns about getting reassigned to an alternative school in**



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order to graduate due to age restrictions?

- **What's the legal age for students to be in high school? [Answer is 22, or 21 for students with disabilities]**
- **BPS has lost about 10% of Cape Verdean population due to housing issues, students who are homeless and are forced to "couch-hop"**
- **CV students are struggling with MATH in terms of the language and comprehension of certain math terms... Also, ELD level 1 are being placed in Gen. Ed. classes?**

### **FAMILY STUDENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



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### Meeting Name

**Date:** October 15th, 2019

**Time:** 7-8 PM

**Location:** Harvard-Kent School

#### Notes:

#### **OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

- Bus issues, student being marked absent because of busses not picking up student
- Children 4 and 5 are too young for busses
- Waitlist numbers aren't tracked accurately, some children are "jumping the line" and parents don't find out until it's too late
- Other US cities (i.e. Brooklyn) seem to have a more seamless school assignment process
- I'm feeling pessimistic about the lottery now that my daughter's entering kindergarten
- Can BPS please show us how the algorithm works? This way we can work to improve it.
- BPS must address transportation operations & school scheduling to accommodate working parents/families?

#### **STAFF & PROGRAM DIVERSITY and INCLUSION**

- We can create more community schools with populations that reflect the diversity of the city
- 

#### **EQUITY, OPPORTUNITY & ACCESS FOR STUDENTS**



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- I thought my child would be prioritized on the waitlist because he has a sibling at HK
- We want all students to have access high performing schools
- Our population will increase by 30% over the next few years, these concerns will only increase
- Capital needs assessments should show the need for more schools in this neighborhood and others. Where's our money going?
- BPS needs to offer more vocational training
- We're worried we won't be the priority for assessment even if we get new facilities
- Parents often send their children to two or more different schools and neighborhoods... we're investing in schools where we're not reaping the benefits

### **FAMILY STUDENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- If we can mobilize like this there is a possibility that the community or someone can push for Charter Schools thus BPS misses out on that funding
- There are many families who aren't represented at this meeting for whom we should be advocating.
- We are an active community, and we want to be active parents at schools in our neighborhood