



Serving Students by Bringing Educators Together

Meeting with Family Leaders
School Climate Survey Initiative
10a-Noon, Wednesday, October 18, 2017
Boston Public Schools, Room 4-43

Presented are minutes from the Boston Compact School Climate Survey meeting held on October 18, 2017. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.BostonCompact.org or email info@BostonCompact.org.

PARTICIPANTS

Family Members: Fabienne Eliacin (Mission Grammar), Brit Johnson (St. Patrick's School), Elsa Flores (James Otis, Mario Umana, EB High School), Tiffany Handy (Jackson Mann, Mendell), Cassandra Cumberlander (Neighborhood House Charter School, Cathedral High School), Aveann Bridgemohan (Joseph Lee School), Tayla Andre (Edward Brooke), Tara Register (John Winthrop Elementary), Karla Walker (Helen Y. Davis Leadership Academy), Paula Kelley (Tech Boston Academy), Huong Vu, Dalida Rocha (Henderson), Lesa Antoine (Mission Grammar)

Committee Members: Julia Mejia (CPLAN), Monica Roberts (BPS), Jake Stern (BPS), Elise Swinford (Boston Compact), Rachel Weinstein (Boston Compact)

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

Monica Roberts and Rachel Weinstein welcomed the group and provided a summary of the work. Each group member introduced him or herself and shared something about how their own family influenced their education.

BRIEFING ON SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS

Jake Stern, Director of Performance Management for BPS' Office of Data and Accountability, led the group through an orientation to climate surveys. Jake shared common survey items from the federal government's National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments. He stressed that, since we're talking about a subset of each sector's surveys and have only about a dozen questions, we'll want to limit the concepts we explore to two or, at most, three. This is because we need multiple questions on the same concept for the data to be reliable.

The group discussed the concepts from the NCSSLE, namely engagement, safety and environment, and members suggested that (a) resources and support, (b) race and discrimination, (c) how fairly the code of conduct is applied, (d) how well a school responds to issues raised by families, and (e) the physical look of the school (from prison to museum) were missing.

Upon learning we need multiple questions for each topic, members noted that it's not realistic to think families can complete the survey (the common questions and the longer survey from a sector) in three minutes.



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A member suggested we look into safety to and from schools, but given our limited question set, the group seemed to think it was better to focus on topics that schools can control, or at least influence (versus transportation, which is managed centrally).

Jake noted that, of the 57,000 students in BPS, the district collects about 14,000 responses to family school climate surveys.

In response to how BPS uses the survey data, Jake shared that the Office of Equity looks at the surveys when there is a complaint. Survey data is not currently used to tier schools. This led to conversation about how to create a survey that will surface major issues, such as racial discrimination at Boston Latin School. A member noted that social media holds schools accountable more than surveys do. She suggested someone from outside of Boston join the group.

Family leaders suggested having an outside data expert help us frame issues and Rachel said we would consult one with our draft questions.

Family leaders want a commitment from each of the three sectors to administer the survey set. They also want a commitment on how the data will be used. They suggest follow-up communication after surveys that says to families, “we’ve heard you and this is what we’re going to do.”

The group expressed genuine concern about gentrification in Boston, fearing they will be pushed out of Boston in the years ahead.

QUICK BUSINESS

The group approved the meeting summary from September.

Family leaders filled out paperwork to receive stipends for this project.

ACTION ITEMS

- Discuss commitments of the three sectors to administer the survey set and use data (Monica, Julia and Rachel to meet on this)
- Julia will schedule an internal meeting of the family leaders
- Review climate surveys from outside of the city of Boston?
- Consider a category of questions for families of students with special needs?
- Consider series of text messages for the survey format?