

Meeting re: Budget Protest
January 17, 2012

In attendance: Lisa F, Guido, Spiro, Heshan, Kieran, Dave A, Ben W, Kelly, Chris P, Julie S-B, Katie, Carrie, Sue Trotz, Kristin, Jess, Jill Lazer, Yasmina, Liz, Leah B – led by Lindsey

Summary of Action

This action is a direct reaction to news about budget received at SSC meeting in December 2011 when started to realize next year's budget would be lower than current budget. Idea of projected enrollment of 824 students and one guidance counselor... enrollment continues to rise and budget continues to be cut. The SSC effort, led by Lindsey W, is choosing to protest the cuts rather than prioritize what would be cut. There is nothing left to cut.

We as a school community are focusing our efforts on the Curley because a question of scope; however, other organizations are doing system-wide BPS actions and are located in JP. We encourage anyone interested in taking this more broadly to get involved (Sue Trotz can give more information and help connect). Feel free to share our playbook with any friends or colleagues who are interested in leading a similar effort. This is a direct reflection of what Sara M and parents at WZELC did a few years ago... standing on the shoulders of one successful action of a partner school.

WZELC tone of lobbying was organized, calm but direct... respectful and demanding but direct... did not turn into a rant or rally... we hope to emulate their efforts and get the same results. They went to school committee mtgs, designated person stood up and read statement, others stood up in solidarity then sat back down silently... power was in numbers.

Vision is of everyone standing in Curley shirts and standing in solidarity. We can consider at a future meeting whether we might bring our kids in their Curley polos because that would make an impact. Show that we are here, we are serious, and we are going to flood you with correspondence in between.

Handouts included school committee mtg schedule (http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/files/2012_bsc_mtgschedule-updatedjan5.pdf) and City Council mtg schedule (<http://www.cityofboston.gov/citycouncil/schedule.asp>). We hope to have a presence at every single one of these meetings over the next two months. It's a tall order but if we can show up and be persistent and relentless in between, it is our best chance of success.

There is a process to sign up to speak at meetings: call, give name, phone number, where you live, and what you wish to speak about. You can also sign up when arrive at the

meeting. You'll be given strict guidelines about how long you can talk (3 minutes) although this can change if time is short or too many people for public comment.

Doodle poll has been created with all dates of meetings that we know who will attend each meeting and speak: <http://doodle.com/e244edkqbva2if3f>. Anybody can sign up and this is our bare minimum to have one Curley person at each meeting.

We want a consistent message, no matter your pet cause, the common denominator should be **“help us protect our Curley community – please don't cut our budget.”**
Enrollment is up and budget is down.

Process to create statements will come out of list of talking points we create tonight. People can copy and paste them into emails. We wish to make this as easy and pain-free as possible for busy people.

We will have a phone script that you can use – will take 2 minutes to give you a chance to call our representatives. We are not dictating how you make your voices heard, this is just a guideline.

Please contact Lindsey if/when you make calls or other outreach that she may keep a list of who is being contacted and how often.

First School Committee meeting is tomorrow:

Wednesday, Jan. 18

6:00pm

26 Court Street, Boston

<http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/location/central-administration-court-street>

State Street T station or park at Center Plaza

(meet at 5:30pm, left-side entrance)

SHOW UP AND WEAR YOUR CURLEY SHIRT IN SOLIDARITY

Speakers and those attending should wear their Curley t-shirts.(can be purchased from Genevieve Day)

Note: Tomorrow night BTU has called a membership protest in front of the meeting so will be loud and angry so all are encouraged to arrive early. Consider going in the side doors if the front door is blocked.

There will be eight (8) meetings before the budget hearing:

1. Wed, Jan 18 – **Lindsey & Yasmina** will present in English and Spanish to represent the school's diversity
2. Wed, Feb 1 - **Heshan**
3. Tues, Feb 7 - **Kieran**

4. Wed, Feb 15 - **Leah**
5. Tues, Feb 28 - **Katie**
6. Wed, March 7 - **Julie**
7. Mon, March 12 - TBD
8. Wed, March 21 - TBD

March 28 is final school committee meeting

Elevator pitch for meetings should stay roughly the same. Suggested topics that each speaker might use to illustrate include the following:

1. IEP needs not getting met
2. The truth is we need more
3. Healthy school climate / general morale
4. Library / access to books
5. Safety / internal bldg communications
6. Protect diversity and the community: cuts weaken the entire BPS system and push families to leave the City, creating a downward spiral. This leadership will send it back to the early 80s
7. Value of the SPC – look at all we’re doing for you (fundraising, parents doing BTU jobs) but we’re exhausted

City meetings are scheduled 12:00-2:00pm at Court Street – they are less convenient for those who do not work downtown but we should try to have representation.

Yasmina heard that Mayor will not advocate for just one school but will listen only to a collective of schools. We will still try.

TALKING POINTS

Our message should evolve with each telling to the committee: perhaps we begin with “Don’t cut us” and evolve to state “It is not enough – we need more.”

The truth is we need more. Not just “no more cuts” but we want more: a librarian, a secretary, another assistant principal and some return of funding. Things that improved because of having money are starting to backslide due to lack of money (e.g. extra hour created room for clubs, interaction between classes, increased sense of community; library).

We need to increase the budget going forward. Stop the cutting trend and restore funding.

A school is an organization that delivers services. Fewer resources mean fewer services (e.g. student IEP). What about legal obligations of special need and SEI students?

Admin-specific cuts and the impact on the day-to-day community and visitors to the school. We want to offer a welcoming environment to students, parents and visitors but have no one to answer the door.

Dreaming... what would we want for the Curley if we had the money:

A second assistant principal, another secretary, a librarian, another guidance counselor, more lunch mothers, creative supervision on the playground to teach games and conflict avoidance

ANet has increased hours/days of testing – this is a huge strain on teachers and students: \$14,000 went into these consultants. Less time on teaching impacts students negatively. More testing but less resources.

[ADDENDUM - After reading these minutes, Principal Slater wishes to add the following:

“The decision to invest in ANet was made by me as the instructional leader of the school. It is not a BPS mandate. The value of ANet and its impact on student achievement will be assessed at the completion of the 2 year contract.”]

Anti-bullying and violence prevention: this is a no-funded mandate. Every period, every time, there is an incident. Safety.

Taxes are going up but there is no money. Why?

Value of a school is how much the community cares. Cadre of committed parents and teachers are beating the drum about how great the school is and why people should stay in Boston. Harder to tell this story = negative impact on the larger community.

Oversubscribed classes
Stress and chaos.

With continued budget cuts, those who can will leave the system. Curley is a diverse school, one of the few that are left. Will we fight for it: let it go all middle class or keep the value that is the school for everyone?

Curley community coming out when not being closed or moved is a big deal. School has been the “darling” of Court Street.

NEXT STEPS

- Put together a media presentation compiling interviews from teachers, staff, students and parents – *Kelly & Dave to explore*
- Social networking – *Heshan & Kelly*
- Watch the Globe/Herald for articles and write letters to the author(s) – *Jess*

- Each of us reach out to someone different than you to bring to the meeting – *Everyone/Class parents*
- Handouts for the Science Fair (e.g. list of meetings, names of reps, statement) – *Lisa Folder*
- Create per-pupil-spending budget over the past 5 years – *Chris Power*
- Get data on school climate survey – *Leah, Carrie & Jill*
- Have a parent write a personal op-ed piece to JP Gazette
- Look to see where else Superintendent and Richard Stutman are going for “open process” of budget cut community meetings (this is where the press will be) – *Sue Trotz*
- Invite Matt O’Malley and other City Council members to the school – during the day to see the kids/teachers in action
- Learn what are Court Street line items in budget (BPS) and what are specific to the Curley (Jeff is in charge of)
- Phone bank

PARKING LOT OF IDEAS

JP press (Patch, Gazette)

Boston Globe (letters to editor)

WBUR

Multi-media (twitter, Facebook)

Video

State representatives (Sonia Chang-Diaz was principal for a day recently)

Are facilities covered in our budget? Custodians are not.

Include students at the meeting

Provide anecdotes when telling stories

We may have City Council members who would speak on behalf of the school, as they have done before (per Sue Trotz) – twitter: #Fairbudgets4BPSkids + Facebook

Tues, Jan. 21

6:30pm

next Budget meeting @ Carrie’s house (9 Park Lane, JP)

Wed, February 1st

6:00pm

26 Court Street, Boston

replace SPC meeting – all should go to the School Committee meeting