

BPS parents release e-mails showing City Hall’s secretive plans on school closings

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), a group of Boston Public School (BPS) parents, today releases internal City Hall communications regarding the use of the now-discredited McKinsey Report on Boston school facilities to support plans to close BPS schools. The e-mails obtained by QUEST through a Public Records Request, reveal conversations involving City officials, outside consultants and lobbyists.

“The e-mails provide a disturbing window on the way City Hall sees the education of our children,” said Megan Wolf of QUEST. “While the Mayor was publicly scoffing at parents pointing to his plans to close schools, his own education people were deep in discussion with outside consultants and lobbyists about just such plans. It’s hard to trust any City Hall-led process around school closings after reading these communications.”

One particularly illuminating message refers to conversations between a key City Hall education official and an outside consultant regarding a contract to create a “strategy and implementation plan” for the new BPS Superintendent, based on the McKinsey findings.

QUEST has made public a selection of the e-mails via

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/315046292/Boston-City-Hall-internal-emails-released-June-7-2016-by-QUEST> as rumors swirl concerning an upcoming announcement from City Hall regarding planned school closings. The group released the entire McKinsey report last month. While City officials have publicly distanced themselves from the recommendations of the McKinsey audit, Mayor Walsh continues to cite, in public pronouncements, the highly questionable figure of a BPS capacity of “over 90,000 seats.” Such declarations can serve no other purpose than to pave the way for a round of school closings.

“If an honest assessment reveals overcapacity and unsafe buildings in the BPS, then let’s have an open public discussion about how to respond,” said QUEST member, Kevin Murray. “But that’s not what’s happening now. School closings are being pursued behind closed doors, along with Unified Enrollment, the charter school referendum and various other initiatives, as part of a larger plan to ‘reinvent’ public education in Boston.”

Numerous studies show that urban school closings can cause serious dislocations in the affected school communities. In Chicago, Philadelphia, New York and other cities, mass closings have had disproportionate impact on children of color and often do not, in and of themselves, result in substantial budgetary savings.