

BOSTON PARENT GROUP QUESTIONS RENEWING BOSTON COMPACT AND PURSUING A UNIFIED LOTTERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE September 17th, 2015

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Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), a grassroots organization of Boston Public School parents with children who have attended over 30 Boston Public Schools, voiced concern about the Mayor's plan to expand the Boston Compact agreement between charter, parochial, and Boston Public schools. QUEST has particular concerns with a proposal to drastically alter enrollment policies.

QUEST parents say the plan's expansion of enrollment to include non-district charter schools will have a negative impact on Boston's students. "Unlike charters, BPS educates English Language Learners of all levels and children with a wide range of special needs, and takes students mid-year and in any grade. Where is the partnership here?" said Karen Oil, BPS parent and QUEST member. QUEST also pointed out that BPS has lost tens of millions of dollars to charter schools who receive 49% of Chapter 70 funds, though serving only 12% of Boston students, and criticized the lack of charter school accountability to the communities and families they serve, especially in regards to high suspension rates and low graduation rates of boys of color.

QUEST urges Mayor Walsh and other city leaders to take action in the following areas before expanding an agreement with non-district schools:

(1) Racial and economic impact assessment of recently adopted school assignment plan, which was arrived at through two years of community process, before any changes are made. (2) Adequate and equitable funding for Boston Public Schools, including reimbursement for funds lost to charter schools. (3) Transparent data collection from charter schools that go beyond test scores in order to evaluate the quality of schools. (4) Compliance with progressive discipline strategies, as mandated by the State; diversity in hiring practices, and parental participation in governance of schools. (5) Policy change that would require charters to fill empty seats at all times of year and for all grades like public districts are required to do.

QUEST points out that the Compact, adopted in 2011, has shown little benefit for the vast majority of Boston's students and believes that expanding a multi-district education system with little transparency or accountability will increase inequitable options for the city's students, especially those with the greatest needs.

To allies:

Dear Friends,

Yesterday, Mayor Walsh announced an expansion of the Boston Compact, an agreement between BPS, charter and parochial schools, and proposed changes to the city's assignment lottery. As advocates for quality, equity and transparency in our schools, and having been intensely involved in the assignment review, we are deeply discouraged by this news.

We've included, below, a press release QUEST sent out yesterday afternoon regarding this announcement and have also attached the request for data we made to BPS in March of 2014 regarding the racial and economic equity of the assignment plan. Despite continued requests and multiple promises, there has been no public analysis of the plan.

We believe any changes to the Boston Compact and the assignment plan must be done only after careful analysis and community input and we hope that you will join with us as we question whether this is the best path for the young people of Boston and the future of public education in Boston and beyond.

Sincerely, Megan Wolf, on behalf of QUEST

To principals:

Dear BPS Principal,

I am happy to greet you as a member of QUEST (Quality Education for Every Student), an organization of BPS parents with children in over 30 of the city's schools.

This week, we have seen the roll out of an important element of an effort by the Walsh Administration to transform public education in Boston. We applaud the Mayor's willingness to exercise leadership in the areas of education, but are concerned that he is sidelining other education stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents, students, etc) in the process. More importantly, we believe that the new direction announced at Thursday night's dinner is the wrong direction for Boston's schools.

In response to the Mayor's announcement, QUEST distributed widely the press release below. We thought you, as a BPS Principal, would be interested in our perspective. We would also like to know your perspective on the proposed changes. If you'd like to be in dialogue with us on these issues, please contact the people mentioned in the release or contact us via qualityforeverystudent@gmail.com or via facebook at [questbps](https://www.facebook.com/questbps).

Sincerely, Megan Wolf (BPS parent) on behalf of QUEST