

BPS PARENTS SKEPTICAL ABOUT NEW SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT PROPOSALS

PRESS RELEASE

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Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), a group of Boston Public School parents with children in over 30 of the city's schools, expressed concern over the three new proposals released by the Boston Public Schools yesterday. A letter accompanying the release of the proposals insists that they are the "best of the best," but QUEST parents have their doubts.

As always, QUEST's primary concern is that, in their headlong the rush to get students into schools "close to home," the Mayor and the BPS are going to lock students in some neighborhoods out of the quality schools in the system. Mary Battenfeld, a parent of three BPS students and a professor of education at a local college put it this way: "The ten zone model, with its glaring inequities, disregards the EAC's [the External Advisory Committee named by the Mayor] work and data on fair access to quality schools. The two "Home-Based" models have more potential, but if the walk zone preference is maintained or strengthened, children in areas without any or good schools "close to home" will lose. "

"I want to feel good about these proposals, but I honestly can't," said Roslindale parent, Kevin Murray. "The EAC has been working on a set of proposals for the past couple of months and now, at the last minute, the 'best of the best' comes in the form of three substantially new proposals with more holes in them than Columbia Road. And a deal is in the works behind the scenes to strengthen the walk-zone preference by changing the way that preference is implemented."

The BPS has scheduled a single public meeting on Monday, February 4 for community input on the proposals. For QUEST co-founder, Megan Wolf, this is unacceptable. "After all the talk about how transparent this process has been and how much the community has been involved, I can't believe the BPS is offering a single chance for input, in one place, on a Monday night when many people won't be able to make it. With all that is new and unknown about these proposals, people need a chance to get their questions answered...and their comments heard. There are some ideas here that reflect community concerns, but others definitely do not. The devil, as always, will be in the details that aren't yet known."

QUEST will continue to dialogue with the BPS and the EAC about these proposals and to invite parents to all public meetings about them.