

Jenny Aiello
C.W. Henry School Parent
SRC written testimony
June 15, 2017

Re: policies & procedures

My thoughts and comments stem from responses provided by Chief Operating Officer Fran Burns and Dr. Karen Kolsky during the SRC policy meeting on June 8, 2017 regarding Policy 705: Safety. Ms. Burns stated that the district has shared ownership with principals for implementing the safety policy. In response to a parent's question as to how information will be given to non-verbal students or students in need of other learning supports, Dr. Kolsky stated that the school safety team would be involved and that the information would be documented at the school level and kept in a safety binder as well as being discussed at Back to School Night. I agree that these should be the proper protocols but what if that doesn't happen at the school level? How would you, the SRC, know based on these upper level administration responses whether parents have truly been informed?

Back to School Night is the night when most families come in to the school and it is the ideal time for disseminating information. This year, our BtSN simply included an introduction by the principal of herself, the Assistant Superintendent of Learning Network 6, Jermall Wright and our teachers. The PTA was allowed a few minutes to speak about fundraising efforts to renovate our playground but after that, parents were released to meet with their child's teacher. The agenda for the evening stated that the Assistant Superintendent and Councilwoman Helen Gym would speak. He did not and she was not scheduled to be at our school. By the time the Title 1 discussion was held at 7:40 p.m., there were approximately 9 people in attendance and parents were not made aware in advance, that we would have the opportunity to make suggestions as to how the parent involvement funds could be spent. Upon learning that the Title 1 presentation was actually more of a discussion with parents than a presentation to parents, several parents said they would have attended. I

have attached the agenda for Back to School Night that came home with my child on September 14, 2016 and the agenda that was handed out at the door on September 22, 2016. Please note that the principal's scheduled power point presentation on the first agenda was removed and Mr. Wright and Councilwoman Gym were added. There was no opportunity for anyone, especially new families to our school, to learn about ANY policies, including attendance, inclement weather, dress code or communication, let alone safety.

Parents have repeatedly requested to improve communication within our community by using multiple approaches. We realize not everyone has reliable access to computers, internet, and cell phones so it is imperative for the school to reach out through various means including letters home in communication folders, robo calls, Remind texts, timely newsletters, PTA communications (enews & facebook) and the school website in order to attempt to cover all bases. Parents have also requested new family orientations be held each year so that regardless of what grade your child enters the school, you and your child will be made to feel welcome and given the necessary information about policies, procedures and school supports that will allow you to be an integral part of the school community. This should not be considered an inconvenience to school administration and the opinions of a few parents as to how they like to receive information should not dictate for the entire school community.

I'm sharing this because the generalized responses provided by Ms. Burns and Dr. Kolsky may sound good during a policy meeting, but may not necessarily reflect what happens at the school level. How will the SRC and the district ensure parents are receiving the information as intended?