

City, Superintendent and Charter Leaders Meet Quietly to Decide on What to Do with 'Surplus' School Buildings Proposed for Closing

Charter School Operators to Benefit at Our Students' Expense

Last week, as thousands of Boston students, parents, and teachers were learning – many for the first time – that the superintendent was about to propose that their school be closed, charter school operators were meeting secretly with city and school officials to plan on how to make use of the closed buildings. As you will read in the below verbatim email from Marc Kenan, executive director of the Massachusetts Charter School Association, charter school leaders are salivating at the possibility of leasing 'surplus' Boston School buildings – even though the final decision on the superintendent's proposal to close as many as a dozen Boston schools has not yet been made.

Charter schools currently drain over \$60 million from the public schools' education budget. Under the Ed Reform law, charters will double and the yearly outflow to charters will reach an estimated \$110 Million. As our schools suffer through yet another round of budget reductions, we have to ask, How much will be left for our public schools after charters grab their share? Looked at another way, how strong is the city's commitment to our public schools?

From: Marc Kenan [mailto:kenen@rcn.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 02, 2010 08:31 AM
To: Undisclosed-Recipient: <Undisclosed-Recipient>
Subject: Boston charters sit down with BPS and the city

Dear charter friends,

In an unprecedented meeting yesterday, Boston charter school leaders met with Boston Superintendent Carol Johnson, her staff and high ranking members of the Menino Administration. The topic of discussion was a possible "compact of collaboration" between Boston charters and BPS addressing the question: "are there ways to work together that would improve the education of all Boston students?"

The meeting was the first in a series to be held over the next couple of months to explore collaboration. Many issues were put on the table in an initial brainstorming session with more in-depth follow-up scheduled for future sessions.

In a related story, the Globe reported this morning that Mayor Menino and Superintendent Johnson announced yesterday the possibility of the city leasing empty, or soon to be empty BPS buildings to Boston charter schools. This is being discussed in the city in relationship to the move by the district to close a number of BPS schools and reorganize/consolidate/move others. Such a real estate relationship would obviously be a tremendous breakthrough for charters in the state. As goes Boston so goes.....