

**Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco  
Statement Regarding Student Assignment Redesign  
February 2, 2010**

Good evening. I'm Matthew Kelemen, President of the Board of Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco. PPS, as you know, is a growing network of diverse public school parents who together are building community, defying grim budget and media constraints, staying positive about our cherished public schools, and getting involved at every level to ensure that all of our children are getting a quality education.

As an organization committed to parent voice in San Francisco, we have been honored to partner with the Parent Advisory Council in developing the report that was presented tonight. We believe that parents have spoken eloquently and cogently about what needs to happen to improve our schools and how student assignment policy could better support education for our children. We are especially proud that the report reflects the voices of parents whom the Board and the district often struggles to engage in your own outreach. Based on our healthy collaboration with district staff, we know that the Board and district will take these recommendations seriously as you evaluate the specific options so ably described by staff this evening.

PPS is also an organization that has ten years experience working with parents throughout San Francisco on the public school enrollment process. Thousands of parents in all communities see PPS as a source of information and guidance because we're parents helping parents navigate the enrollment process and understand their options.

Based on that experience, I want to amplify and extend two points that are in the recommendations.

First, **parents are clamoring for quality schools**. As the report said, "Parents perceive deep inequities between schools in different neighborhoods – related to teacher quality, the condition of school and community facilities, resources that families bring to schools, and enrichment opportunities available to children both inside and out of the classroom." This is the real story of our findings and recommendations and it is a story that aligns with the district's strategic plan. We know that district staff is hard at work developing and implementing strategies to create quality schools in all parts of the city. But, we believe that it is time – no, past time – for the Board to give the same visibility, urgency, and consistent attention to that conversation as it has given student assignment. We call on the Board and the district to create a focused and visible process for engaging the community around the plan for creating quality schools.

Second, **parents want to make informed choices**, whether they are selecting their own schools or lending their voice to the conversation about student assignment redesign. Indeed, it is our firm belief that many schools in this city have improved dramatically through the informed choices of parents selecting those schools and committing to their improvement. So, with respect to the student assignment redesign process, we share the concern expressed by so many parents and community members that "they were not given more complete information about the options or the opportunity to weigh in on an actual proposal for a new system." We call on the Board and district to finish the decision-making process with strong community engagement based on data about the implications of the student assignment models. The same needs to hold true for implementation of any new system.

On both of these fronts, PPS stands ready to help.