



Seth Boyden

Discover. Learn. Grow.

October 10, 2018

Dr. Thomas Ficarra
Interim Superintendent of Schools
School District of South Orange and Maplewood
525 Academy Street
Maplewood, NJ 07040

Dear Dr. Ficarra,

On behalf of Seth Boyden Demonstration School's PTA, we're writing about the error that assigned the 2018 PARCC results of Seth Boyden's opt-in students to their zoned school, and not to Seth Boyden. We appreciate your speaking with Presidents Council presidents Tia Swanson and Kathleen Bailie about it earlier this week, and we would like to follow up by sharing our concerns and questions.

Because PARCC scores are meant to inform not only individual student progress but also, and probably more importantly, teacher and school achievement rates, our PTA finds this incorrect data deeply disconcerting.

In order to determine the immediate impact and future repercussions from this error, we respectfully request the following information:

1. The number of SB PARCC results that were incorrectly designated to children's zoned schools vs. Seth Boyden.
2. Whether this was also was an issue with Marshall/Jefferson with their new opt-in program.

3. How the data error, if not corrected, will skew Seth Boyden's school results, as well as those of the zoned schools that the opt-in students come from. How will these scores then impact school rankings from online sources like niche.com and schooldigger.com? (Please be mindful that real estate brokers and online real estate listings use these data to market certain neighborhoods in our towns at the expense of others.)

4. How PARCC results are used to evaluate teachers.

5. How the district plans to use PARCC scores to inform the re-zoning conversation and planning.

6. Whether it is possible at this point to fix the problem manually and resubmit the data to the NJ Department of Education with the scores going to the correct schools.

Our understanding is that this error was a human one, and that it also occurred in 2015. Regardless of whether the State of NJ continues to administer PARCC, we must insist that a mistake of this type never happens again. We hope you will do what is necessary this year to ensure that it does not occur in the future.

Additionally, if the existing flawed data cannot be changed, we request that the district provide transparency to the entire SOMA school community about the lack of opt-in students' PARCC scores being included in the Seth Boyden results.

Thank you very much for addressing this important issue.

Sincerely,

Seth Boyden PTA President Olivia Yearns

PARCC Score Errors Special Committee, Seth Boyden PTA: Carrie Puglisi (Committee Chair), Alison Poe (PTA Vice President and Committee Member), Sally Unsworth (PTA Membership Chair and Committee Member), Robin Simon (Committee Member), Katherine Gebremedhin (Committee Member), and Maggie Tuohy (Committee Member)

on behalf of the entire Seth Boyden PTA

cc: South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education