



ClaTed GODJON <parentsofaltamira@gmail.com>

Re: Altamira - Latest Update

1 message

Cindy Izquierdo To: jessica.howell
Cc: parentsofaltamira

Wed, Nov 21, 2018 at 12:55 AM

Skye, thanks for adding me to this list!
Hi Parents,

I'm so glad this group has formed! Texas Charter schools are generally made up of an appointed board (not an elected one like a public school) wayside's board <https://waysideschools.org/school-board/>. Each charter must have a grievance process. Has anyone asked for their grievance policy? I complained to Principal Whitfield, her e-mail response said the following on 11-7-18:

"We will be using Extend A Care and pay is comparable. We could not announce to AMA parents, until the YMCA was clear that we were terminating the contract. We are working to provide a more structured environment after school for our scholars." I can forward you the e-mail if you need it.

I did nothing after that e-mail, mainly because I knew nothing about Extend a care, so was going to wait for their e-mail. I was also relying on what principal Whitfield said in her e-mail that pricing would be "comparable." I received an e-mail from Extend a care on Friday 11-16-18, and realized the fees were more. I was certainly going to talk to the principal after the break, but then I ran into Skye, and she informed me about your advocacy regarding this matter!

I think the board must agree and hold a public meeting regarding changes to school programs, so I checked for the past few months August, September and October, and they did not discuss any changes to the after school program. Here are the meeting minutes <https://waysideschools.org/required-postings/>

The Texas Education Agency oversees the charter schools, and a complaint could be filed with them. I wish I could go to the meeting on Monday! Let me know if there's any way to further help, and I'd like to sign the petition as well. Thanks for standing up!

Cindy Izquierdo - Parent of 1

On Tue, Nov 20, 2018 at 10:44 PM Skye Howell <jessica.howell> wrote:
Here's update 2!

Skye Howell, MEd, CTRS
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers (What's This?)
Equity and Inclusion Associate
Adjunct Professor, Human Services/Student Development
Adjunct Faculty Association Representative- Riverside Campus

Begin forwarded message:

Hello Wayside School Board,

I hope you all are well as I first would like to thank you for the opportunity of sharing some major concerns on behalf of 40 plus parents at Altamira Bradshaw Campus. As many parents could not be here this evening, I have been authorized to speak on behalf of the parents and do so with their utmost respect, dignity, and regard.

Today I bring to awareness to the issue of After School Care at Altamira, its process of change, and its financial but not limited to impact on families who participate. Many of us have recently and abruptly been informed that current provider YMCA program will be replaced by Extend-A-Care program on December 10th, 2018. This decision was a surprise to all as we were emailed of the change seemingly overnight. The original email sent by Principal Whitfield provided absolutely no explanation of the change but indicated it official, and claimed that the change would be “an easy and smooth transition.” This email had red flags. I, Clarence Jones, requested a meeting with the Principal the following day.

The initial meeting with the Principal was very surprising to say the least. Upon meeting with the Principal, I was informed that there has been a lack in communication between the school and Extend-A-Care and the issue of financial increase had not thoroughly been reviewed. Initially, I was told per the Principal that the school and Extend-A-Care would work in accordance to ensure that pricing would not alter. What you paid for the YMCA was to be the amount that you pay for Extend-A-Care. As the meeting pursued, it became apparent that the Principal was not aware that Extend-A-Care had sent out emails stating their fees for registration and monthly cost 40.00 and 217.00. My wife and I brought this to her attention as she didn't know the pricing of the new program she and others chose to implement. The story then changed to registration fees possibly being waived, but an increase in monthly cost could ensue. I was quick to point out that these two notions in pricing policy are very different, could impact parents significantly and that I was here on behalf of those that cannot afford any price hike.

Our meeting however, did provide insight into why the change was made. The Principal and the oversight department felt the YMCA was “unsafe.” After listening to her explain the complaints/violations/behavior concerns, it was mentioned that she would have gotten rid of the YMCA last year if she would have had the power to do so. This was very interesting to hear because I have never had an issue with the YMCA and my kids have been at the school since its inception. When I asked about having a parent meeting to discuss her concerns with the Y, she explained that this was an internal issue and therefore parent involvement was not needed. My wife and I were simply appalled considering that this issue couldn't be more “external!”

I had some questions. When she informed me that the decision to end the YMCA was made over 7-8 weeks ago, I wondered why parents weren't notified initially? Why was her initial email sent to parents uninformative on every level? Why were we not involved in the process for a very apparent “EXTERNAL” situation? How does this impact parents on public assistance as the YMCA and Extend-A-Care use two different scales? And if it were truly a case about safety and negligence, why has the YMCA continued to provide services for our children through

December 10th without any oversight from the school? I also wondered how many parents felt like my wife and I.

The following day, I took off from work early, created a petition and stayed the entire evening with the YMCA. The petition discussed the district paying for all additional costs of implementing Extend-A-Care as we the parents had absolutely no input in the matter, it was done right under our noses in the middle of the Holiday season, and although my family would be able to foot the new pricing, many may not! Every parent that picked up a child that evening signed on and thanked us for taking up the issue on their behalf.

Talking with every parent that picked up kiddos, it became apparent that many parents hadn't received any emails, and simply did not know what was going on. I discussed with them the ins and outs of Extended-A-Care v. the YMCA, my conversation with the Principal, and asked many about their personal experiences involving the two. Some parents were down right upset with the change, others felt in the dark! Many people are on public assistance and unfortunately, these families are hit hardest. As far as public assistance is concerned, the YMCA allows for a higher household income to qualify, as Extend-A-Care bases its calculations off Texas Workforce which indicates far lower household income for qualification.

Since this issue has arisen, we are aware that Extend-A-Care has offered discounts to help off-set costs. No registration costs, 50.00 per child in December, 75.00 per child in January. Although this is very helpful to many of us, many will still find their new cost increase difficult to manage. There are also still some unresolved issues my wife will elaborate on. We need it to be known that this entire situation was handled extremely poorly, without consideration from the majority, and in an untimely manner for those like myself who truly seek equity, fairness and accountability. It feels as though we are undervalued and scooted to the rear. As parents, we are the glue to any school community and need to be a part of the process during major decisions regarding our children's safety, and our financial obligations. Please re-evaluate your processes next time so that this doesn't happen in the future.

25 dollar increase
50 dollar increase w/2 kiddos

* WE SEEK TO HAVE EVERY OFF-SET
COST COVERED.

Thank you, board members, for the opportunity to allow us to voice our concerns. I wanted to speak on behalf of parents who have reached out to us but who could not attend due to their schedules. The following concerns were ^{provided} given to us from some of the parents:

First, Cindy Izquierdo parent of 1, reached out to us and thanked us for forming together to speak out. Ms. Izquierdo, along with many other parents, would like the board to provide information about the charter's grievance process. Another concern of hers, which was common for parents, was that the monthly cost. It was mentioned by Principal Whitfield that it would be comparable to the YMCA but it is not. Prices with EAC are more than the YMCA and the EAC has stricter financial assistance guidelines. In addition, Ms. Izquierdo also agreed that external changes that impact parents, especially related to their children and money, should be discussed in a public setting. She reviewed the boards meeting minutes from August to current and nothing was mentioned.

Another parent named Leticia Amaro, provided the following concerns. She was also concerned with the higher cost, both monthly and during school breaks. She also provided that the school provided vague communication related to the change. In her words she explained "each time I tried to talk to the principal I was stone walled by the administration team." And "I attempted to contact the principal a few different times and was unable to talk to her".

Tristie Martinez, parent of two, also has concerns with the higher cost, vague communication, and even concerns against the EAC. When Mrs. Martinez reached out to EAC to discuss their monthly

As you can see the common theme is the lack of communication by the school and costs. Personally, I stand by these concerns and hope that you consider rectifying the situation by honoring the YMCA prices at least till the end of the school year and include all parents in the decision making of external decisions. Further, I do want to say that out of the 40 plus parents that we have personally spoken to about this issue and not one negative thing was said about the YMCA. I do appreciate the YMCA's staff for all their efforts and know that no program is perfect. If Altamira does not remedy this situation or at least acknowledge where they went wrong, we will be disenrolling our two children from the school either by the end of this year or by the end of the current school year.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Claudia Godoy

Mother of Two Altamira Students.

Date: November 19, 2018

From: Concerned Parents

To: Principal Whitfield, Mr. Garcia (Wayside Operations Director)

Subject: YMCA transition to Extend-A-Care

This is in response to the changes being made to the After-School Care Program. We would like more information as to why it is transitioning from the YMCA to Extend-A-Care. Who approved this change? Who are the owners/administrators of this company? How many companies placed a bid for the contract? Why were the parents not notified when the need for a new contract first came up, which we understand was over six weeks ago?

The parents just learned about these changes on Thursday, November 8, via a letter sent home with the children from Estrella Amezola. However, I (Jessica Gomez) have not heard from the YMCA. Nor, have I heard from Extend-A-Care. I understand that we'll need to sign a contract with them.

We were told that children with a disability will no longer be allowed in the Program. Then I heard that they are accepting kids with disabilities but the process of them being accepted requires an Extend-A-Care rep coming into the classroom to observe those kiddos. This seems very intrusive on multiple levels. However, to exclude any child based on their disability is totally unacceptable and would be an outrage. Since Extend-A-Care receives government funding, this would be a direct violation of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Some parents have received an email from Extend-A-Care listing their fees which is \$137+ per month higher than what is currently charged. This increased fee will cause a financial hardship to many of the families already in the program. How much subsidized funding per child did the YMCA receive and how much per child is Extend-A-Care receiving?

Regarding the Board Meeting parents can attend at Eden Park Academy on November 26 at 12:30 pm: Why were the parents not included in previous board meetings when this issue first came up? Also, most parents work during the day and are unable to attend on such short notice.

Why is this change being made mid-December? It seems a change like this would take affect at the beginning of the school year, or even the calendar year, not mid-month so close to all the holidays. Please justify.

If you are not able to give us a satisfactory response to these concerns, we will proceed to take further action to expose these unacceptable issues. We have been impacted on multiple fronts (financially, child-care available options, loss of relationships for our kiddos, etc.) and truly seek to have the school pay for any off costs due to the changing of the program. We should not have to pay anything extra from what we currently pay for the YMCA. We were not allowed to have a say in the matter whatsoever.

We ask that you reconsider making these changes, especially the increased fees. Even though the adjusted fees from Extend-A-Care is an attempt to rectify, we still are in the same position come February. The impacted families need the opportunity to learn more information and give our input. We're asking for the details as to why and how this all came about and seek full disclosure.

Sincerely,

Jessica Marie Garcia



ClaTed GODJON <parentsofaltamira@gmail.com>

FW: Tonight's Board Meeting @ 6 PM

1 message

Jun Zhu <Jun.Zhu>
To: ClaTed GODJON <parentsofaltamira@gmail.com>

Mon, Nov 26, 2018 at 12:16 PM

Hi Claudia and Teddy,

I am afraid I may not make it tonight, but will try... Below are my concerns:

1. Will increase my after school care fees dramatically for my family with a 27.8% increase. Note that I have two kids that need after school care.
2. My daughter heard complaint from other classmates that the new after school care is mean to the kids. My kids like YMCA.

Thank you so much for you all standing up for us!

Sincerely,

Jun Zhu

From: ClaTed GODJON [mailto:parentsofaltamira@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2018 11:55 AM
To: ClaTed GODJON
Subject: Tonight's Board Meeting @ 6 PM

This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Parents!

I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving. I wanted to provide a quick update to everyone about a correction of **today's board meeting**. The time is actually at **6 pm**, which is even better for parents. If anyone can

Good Morning Claudia,

I will be unable to attend the meeting because I took off part this week. My concerns are:

1. Having care for my son during the breaks. I have been told that the Y was not allowed to offer care during the breaks due to Altamira. I am single mother and had to leave my 5 year old son with my 80 year old grandmother for the fall break. This was difficult for her and him since she gets tired so quickly and he has so much energy.

2. The cost of Extend-a-Care is an additional \$35/day for the breaks. Meaning that we will have to pay an additional \$350 for the two week breaks and \$1,050 for the summer break which is six weeks from what I have been told.

3. The communication with the school. Each time I tried to talk to the principal I was stone walled by the administration team. When email communication goes out they never include the new contact information or the contact information for the principal or assistant principal. I am completely disappointed with lack of communication during this discussion making process. I attempted to contact the principal a few different times and was unable to talk to her.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,
Leticia Amaro

Sent from my iPhone