

# 2024

# Annual Report

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**CPLAN**

Collaborative Parent  
Leadership Action Network



**Empowering Families,  
Transforming Education,  
Building Equity**



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Collaborative Parent  
Leadership Action Network

# Executive Summary

In 2024, CPLAN focused on strengthening our programming and building new community partnerships to enhance our ability to deliver high-quality support and resources that empower families and drive positive change in education. Through workshops, conferences, and collaborative initiatives, we reached hundreds of families, educators, and community partners.

We expanded our Powerful Parents series to Worcester in partnership with the Worcester Education Collaborative and strengthened our academic collaborations with organizations like Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and UMass Boston. From advocating for clean water access in schools to championing vocational education justice and helping establish school site councils, our commitment to equity is driving real change for students across the state.

As we move into 2025, CPLAN remains dedicated to supporting parent leadership and fostering a positive school culture, ensuring that our work continues to shape education systems and communities across Massachusetts.

*In this report, we invite you to explore our year of growth, advocacy, and transformation.*



## Contact Us

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# ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

## VISION

Our vision is for all students to have access to a high quality, equitable education that prepares them for college, career, and life.

## MISSION

CPLAN is a parent- led advocacy organization that seeks to **inform**, **inspire**, and **empower** parents to advocate for a more equitable education for their children.

# Our Advisory Board

Our Advisory Board provides essential guidance to CPLAN, offering expertise from diverse sectors like education, community organizing, public health, and mental health. Their collective experience help ensure our programs stay relevant, effective, and focused on equity, advocacy, and systemic change. Through ongoing collaboration, the Board strengthens our initiatives and enhances our ability to support families and create inclusive educational environments.



**Tayla Andre**  
**Advisory Board, Chair**  
Real Estate Advisor, Author,  
Speaker, Inventor, Community  
Advocate



**Aminah Pilgrim**  
Associate Professor,  
*Berklee College of Music*  
Senior Lecturer,  
*UMass Boston College of  
Liberal Arts*



**Cameron Smith**  
Black Student Union President;  
Psychology & Community  
Youth Education Student,  
*Clark University*



**Steve Ridini, Ed.D**  
President & CEO,  
*HRIA*



**Donkor Minors**  
Vice President at Who's Got  
Morale, Founder of Don  
Firearms, Teacher at Boston  
Public Schools



**Laurie- Jo Wallace**  
Senior Director, Training &  
Capacity Building,  
*HRIA*



## Do you have a passion for education equity?

If you're interested in becoming a member of CPLAN's advisory board, please reach out to [icaraballo@cplanma.org](mailto:icaraballo@cplanma.org)

# 2024 Highlights



1

## Expanding Our Reach

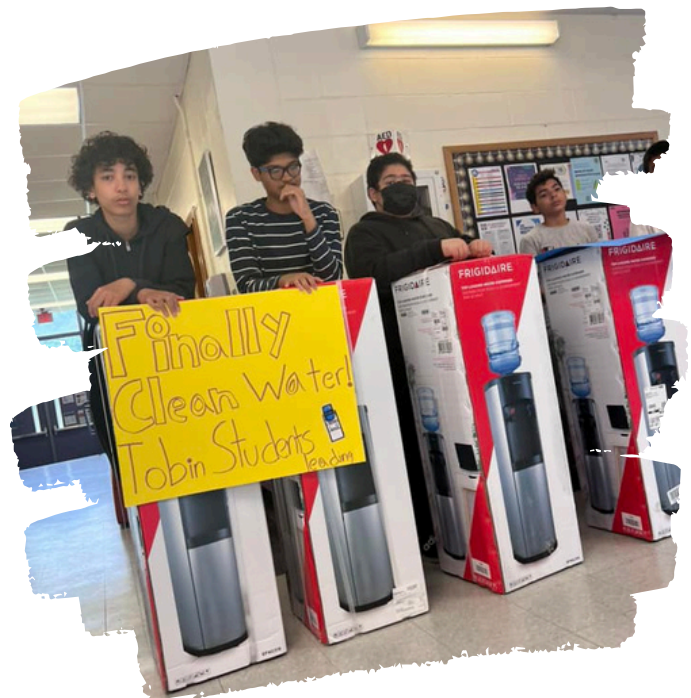
CPLAN participated in several resource fairs, back to school events, and conferences to spread the word about CPLAN's work to families, organizations and professionals that work in the field of family engagement. We presented at the National UPLAN conference and the One Goal Partnership Summit.

2

## Advocating for Clean Water Access

Santiago Rivera and Ivelisse Caraballo collaborated with Boston Public Schools to continue replacing water bubblers with filtration systems so all students have access to clean drinking water. This work was supported by Mass DEP and the Shlomo Foundation. Currently, water filtration systems have been installed in over 50 schools, with a scheduled plan in place to complete installations in the remaining schools. Additionally, we have donated 400 water bottles to the Madison Park Technical Vocational High School athletics department.

*For more details, see page 15.*



Students advocating for clean water at the Maurice J. Tobin School in Boston received support from Santiago Rivera, who helped secure an immediate, short-term solution by purchasing new water bubblers until the installation of water filtration systems is completed.

# 2024 Highlights

## 3 Strengthening our Programming

This year, CPLAN developed two leadership tracks—Powerful Parents, which equips parents with foundational advocacy skills, and the Parent Action Network, an alumni cohort focused on deepening leadership and driving systemic change through community-driven initiatives.



## 4 Powerful Solutions Kick-off

We hosted our first “Powerful Solutions” Roundtable to hear from families about issues they’re facing and brainstorm solutions support access, advocacy, and allyship.



# Ivelisse Caraballo

Ivelisse Caraballo serves as the Executive Director of CPLAN, where she has dedicated herself to advancing racial, gender, economic, and social justice in Greater Boston. Starting as a founding member, her leadership and commitment to community empowerment have garnered significant recognition across the state.



These accolades highlight Ivelisse's dedication to the Boston and Brockton communities and her commitment to ensuring all students have access to a fair and high-quality education. Her tireless efforts continue to inspire others to advocate for change in our schools.



**1 Phenomenal Woman**

In March 2024 Ivelisse was honored by the Brockton NAACP as a "Phenomenal Women" alongside nine additional outstanding women in our community.

Along with the Brockton NAACP Phenomenal Woman Award, she received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition, City of Brockton Official Citation, presented by the Mayor of Brockton, Congressional Recognition from House of Representatives, and an Official Citation from the State Senate.



**2 Liberation Leader**

Earlier this year, Ivelisse was also recognized by the Boston Women's Fund as a Women's Liberation leader. She was selected for BWF's Leading Us Toward Liberation list, which honors individuals who have significantly impacted racial, gender, economic, and social justice over the past 40 years. This acknowledgment highlights her exceptional work and leadership in driving systemic change.

Under Ivelisse's leadership, CPLAN has made substantial strides in advocating for justice and equality. Her strategic vision and dedication to community engagement continue to inspire and empower those around her. Ivelisse's work exemplifies the core values of CPLAN and serves as a beacon of hope and progress for families across Massachusetts.



# RECOGNIZING DR. GAYL CRUMP SWABY



## EXTRAordinary Women

"It's an honor to be recognized and to receive this award from the Mayor's Office. Being recognized is incredibly humbling.

***I truly believe that extraordinary things can be done by ordinary people who set their minds to it and work hard.***

There are so many remarkable women who inspire me every day, and to be counted among them is truly meaningful. This award is a reflection of the support system that has helped me along the way, from my family and friends to my colleagues and mentors. This will definitely motivate me to keep striving to make a difference. Thank you all for believing in me."



### Reshaping Community Wellness

Dr. Gayl Crump Swaby developed trauma-informed and healing-centered training for parents, educators, and school leaders. This project focused on addressing historical and generational traumas impacting BIPOC communities while equipping participants with culturally responsive strategies to support children and families. By combining her expertise in trauma treatment and multicultural counseling, Dr. Crump Swaby is delivering this curriculum as an integrated component of CPLAN's mission to provide mental health education to the school community to create a safe space for families to better understand their emotional well-being and advocate for systemic changes within schools.



### Springfield College

As a Professor of Counseling and the Online/Hybrid Program Coordinator for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at Springfield College's School of Social Work and Behavioral Sciences, Dr. Gayl Crump Swaby has been instrumental in shaping the next generation of mental health professionals. Her leadership in the Boston region focuses on preparing counselors to deliver culturally responsive and trauma-informed care, particularly for BIPOC individuals and communities.

# Strengthening Our Programs

In 2024, CPLAN expanded and strengthened its parent leadership programming by developing two distinct cohorts to better support and empower families:

## Powerful Parents

This track equips parents with practical tools & strategies to navigate the education system, advocate for their children, and build supportive learning environments.



### Community Building

(IN- PERSON- CHILD CARE + FOOD PROVIDED)



### Introduction to the US Education System

(VIRTUAL)



### Nurturing Your Child's Educational Success

(VIRTUAL)



### Unfair Differences in Education

(VIRTUAL)



### Standing up for a Fair Education

(VIRTUAL)



### Creating a Happy & Supportive School Environment



### Graduation Ceremony

(IN- PERSON- CHILD CARE + FOOD PROVIDED)

## Parent Action Network

Designed for graduates of the Powerful Parents program, this track focuses on deepening parent leadership and advocacy skills.



### Learning the Team



### Leading Together: Parents' Role in School Decision-Making



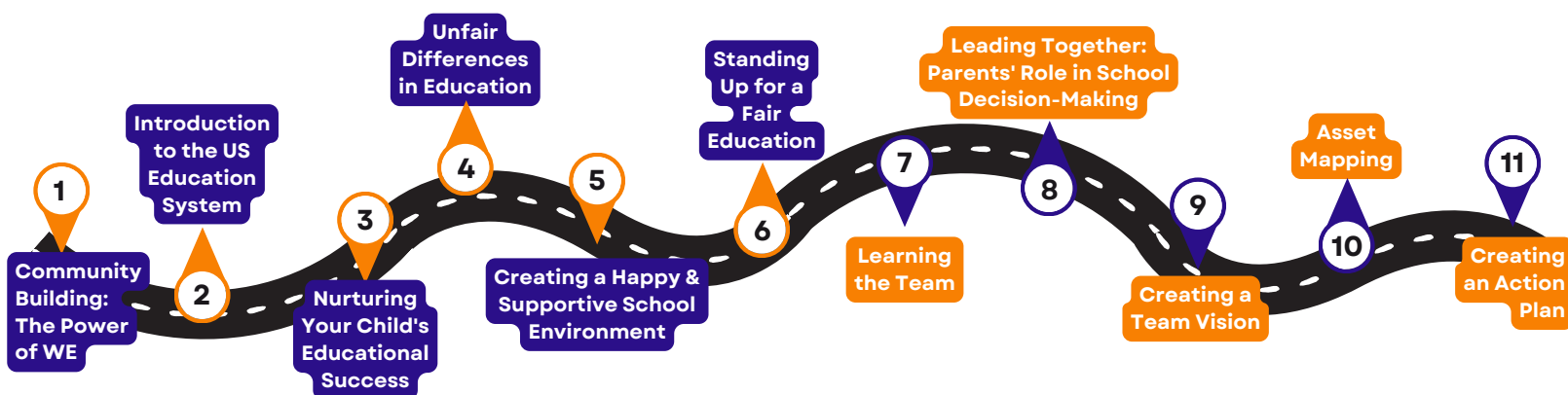
### Creating a Team Vision



### Asset Mapping



### Creating an Action Plan



*Read on to learn about the impact of our first Powerful Parents pilot series!*

# POWERFUL PARENTS

## 2024 Worcester Pilot



CPLAN partnered with Worcester Education Collaborative to launch the pilot of our "Powerful Parents Program" (P3), also known as "Padres Poderosos" for a condensed version of our workshop series tailored to their specific priorities.

This program equipped parents with essential tools and knowledge to better understand and support their children's educational journeys. The skills and insights gained through P3 also empowered parents to drive change within schools, fostering more inclusive environments, challenging systemic racism, and addressing barriers that marginalize families in education.



### Spring



**March 26th:** Community Building  
(IN- PERSON- CHILD CARE + FOOD PROVIDED)



**April 2nd:** Nurturing Your Child's  
Educational Success



**April 9th:** Unfair Differences in Education  
(VIRTUAL)



**April 23rd:** Standing up for a Fair Education  
(VIRTUAL)



**April 30th:** Creating a Happy & Supportive  
School Environment (VIRTUAL)



**May 21st:** Graduation Ceremony  
(IN- PERSON- CHILD CARE + FOOD PROVIDED)

### Fall



**October 7th:** Introduction to the  
New IEP Form (VIRTUAL)



**October 28th:** Crafting Effective  
Student Parent Concerns (VIRTUAL)



**November 12th:** Pathways to Parent  
Leadership (VIRTUAL)

**To be continued  
Spring 2024!**

We expanded our reach to over 45 Worcester parents by partnering with Worcester Education Collaborative! This collaboration culminated in our very first graduation ceremony, where parents received certifications and committed to enhancing their education advocacy.



*Through dynamic, interactive workshops, parents developed practical strategies to advocate for their children's needs, resulting in increased confidence, improved academic outcomes, and stronger parent-child relationships.*

# Our Impact

## 2024 Powerful Parents Worcester Pilot

### INCREASED PARENT INVOLVEMENT

90%

of parents reported being more involved after the workshops.



### INCREASED COMFORT LEVELS

89%

of parents felt highly comfortable advocating for their child's education. Compared to 54% at the start.



### INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION SYSTEM

English-Speaking Parents

77%

of parents reported strong understanding. Compared to 38% at the start.



Spanish-Speaking Parents

100%

of parents rated their understanding as high. Compared to 63% at the start.



### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES



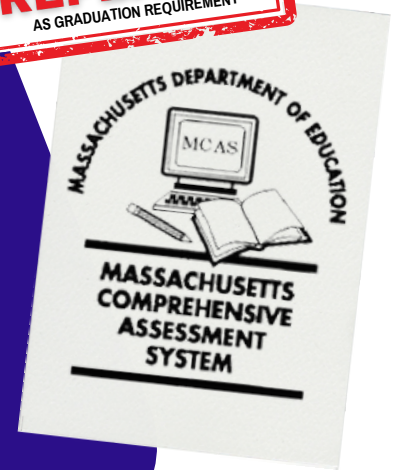
Both cohorts overcame key challenges related to understanding the education system and supporting their children's education.



The Spanish-speaking parents emphasized a greater need for communication in their language and worked to overcome time management barriers, highlighting the need for continued tailored support.

# 2024 ELECTION PARENTS WEIGH IN ON REMOVING MCAS GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

**REPEALED**  
AS GRADUATION REQUIREMENT



(From left to right) Jorge Vega, School Committee member; Deb McCarthy, MTA's Vice President; Cristina Horner, Equity & Inclusion Strategist; Georgeangel Barreras, Teacher; Ivelisse Caraballo, Education Advocate

In October, CPLAN participated in a panel discussion about the election ballot questions to help inform families of both sides, ahead of the 2024 Election.

Ivelisse moderated the discussion about Ballot Question 2- Whether MA should repeal the MCAS standardized test.

Ivelisse was also interviewed in a Boston.com discussion about the MCAS high school graduation requirement. While CPLAN did not take a position on ballot Question 2, Ivelisse highlighted the difference in parental opinions on this issue. Parents express concerns about the MCAS's fairness and effectiveness, yet recognize the challenges of removing it without a clear alternative.



READ MORE



# Meet some of our Powerful Parents



## Perla Gillittie

Worcester Graduate of Powerful Parents Program

Perla Gillittie, Chair of the Worcester SEPAC, has embraced her leadership role by implementing tools to increase participation in SEPAC meetings. She actively collaborates with organizations to offer parents additional workshops focused on Special Education, enhancing support for families.

In her words:



Learning about my son's diagnosis and how to support him really helped me name my emotions and learn about myself, too. The [program] provides guidance, clarifying some characteristics that we have lost in our busy routine.



## Santiago Rivera

CPLAN member & Education Equity Advocate

As a parent of young children, Santiago is passionate about improving the school system through immediate, tangible changes at the Tobin School in Boston. He's worked closely with the parent council to introduce resources like 3D printers, upgraded facilities, and revitalized spaces. Through initiatives like the Clean Water Access project, Santiago continues to empower students to advocate for their needs and create lasting impact.

In his words:



We cant change the system overnight but we can make a huge difference one school at a time!

# A PATH TO PARENT LEADERSHIP

## Noelia Chafoya

*Parent Advocacy in Worcester*

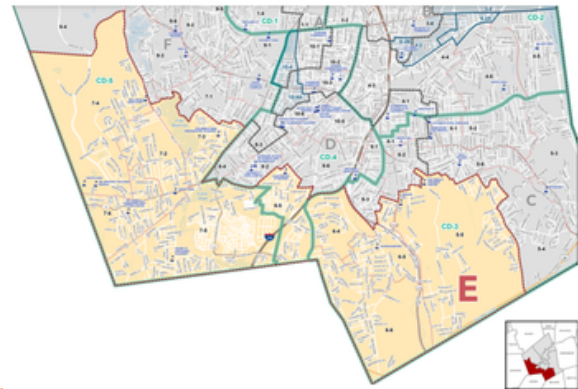


Shortly after completing our workshop series, Noelia Chafoya announced her candidacy for a seat on Worcester's School Committee. Inspired by the knowledge she gained, she embraced her role as both a parent and a change-maker in her community.

Noelia drew on the knowledge and tools gained during the workshops to inform her campaign priorities and amplify her advocacy efforts. She also utilized CPLAN's publicly available informational videos about parent power and the role of school committees to help educate families and voters. By leveraging these resources, Noelia ensured that constituents were well-informed about the importance of school committees and the critical role they play in shaping local education.

### **CPLAN'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING PARENT LEADERSHIP**

Noelia's story demonstrates how CPLAN's workshops and accessible resources can empower parents to step into leadership roles in education. Her commitment to ensuring all families have a voice in shaping educational policies reflects CPLAN's mission to equip families with the tools to advocate for equity and student success.



### **WHY THIS MATTERS**

Informed leadership in education ensures that family voices are not only heard but are instrumental in creating lasting, meaningful change.

When parents step into positions of influence, like serving on school committees, they bring a unique perspective rooted in lived experiences. This approach helps shape policies with equity and inclusivity at their core, ultimately benefiting all students, particularly those from marginalized communities.

# From IEP to Masters Degree

Meet Nay, a participant in CPLAN's Powerful Parents Certification Program.

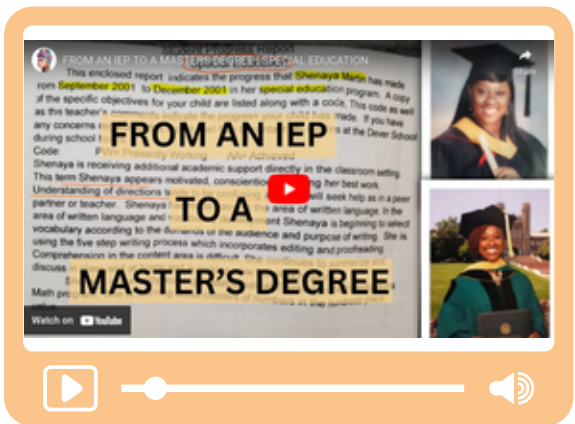


In our Powerful Parents program families learn strategies for nurturing their child's educational success, understanding their unique needs, fostering literacy, advocating for equity in education, creating supportive school environments, and collaborating effectively with schools.

From the moment Nay joined our program, we recognized that her story resonated deeply with the workshop's themes of representation, learning styles, advocacy, and the transformative power of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Nay embodies CPLAN's belief that an IEP should not be a **limitation** but a **pathway** to *enhanced opportunities* for success.

Inspired by Nay's journey, we encouraged her to share her story during our workshop and she understood the assignment. To our delight, she not only embraced the opportunity but went above and beyond, creating a powerful video that beautifully captured her experiences.

*Her story reminds us of the transformative **power that parents have** to shape their children's educational success.*



Scan to hear about  
Nay's journey in her  
own words!







# Brockton Advocacy

With the creation of our CPLAN chapter in Brockton, we've shown how local collaboration can lead to profound and lasting change in our schools. Together, we've worked with dedicated parents, community partners, and school administration to forge a partnership focused on informing and empowering parents to take ownership of their children's academic environment.

*Here's how we've been making a difference in Brockton:*



## Transitioning from Community Center

Unfortunately, the Brockton Community and Family center is no longer accessible to community organizations at 20 Goddard Street. This space will now be converted to an adult learning center through Brockton Public Schools.

## Parent Voice in School Councils

Parents are at the heart of our work. To amplify their voice in school decisions we've focused on coaching them take an active role in School site councils. Read on to learn more about the schools and parents CPLAN helped support.

## Navigating the Parent Portal

Each year CPLAN works with Brockton Public Schools IT department to host Infinite Campus workshops, helping families gain access to the parent portal where they can track their child's grades, attendance and assignments. This is available in 4 different languages!

## Multicultural Resource Fair

Brockton Public Schools brings together over 200-300 families through an annual resource fair. This resource fair, has been a beacon of hope for the Brockton community, providing a platform for families to access social services, connect with support networks, discover opportunities for stable housing, and other essential resources available to them.

As the educational landscape continues to evolve in Boston, CPLAN is at the forefront, advocating for meaningful, lasting change. Together with parents, educators, and community members, we continue to break down barriers, challenge the status quo, and fight for a brighter educational future for every child in this remarkable city.



## **Boston Public Schools Community Engagement Advisory Council**

Our Executive Director sits on Boston Public School's Community Engagement Advisory Council (CEAC). CEAC is the district's effort to formally enlist and partner with constituent-based organizations and community members to help Boston Public Schools deeply engage all members of our community and invested community members regarding initiatives and policies. It gives the opportunity to network and build trust with community organizations that are in the communities of the families we serve to help BPS understand how to better serve the community .

*Read on to see the work we're doing with Water Access in Boston!*

## Our Part:

# Enhancing Clean Water Access for Boston Students

## Accessible Signage

In 2024, CPLAN collaborated with Boston Public Schools (BPS) to enhance access to clean drinking water for students across the district. Together with BPS, we developed visually clear signage to direct all students, regardless of language, away from faucet water and toward newly installed water filtration stations. Additionally, we partnered with BPS to update the language on their website, making it more relevant and accessible for families seeking more information.



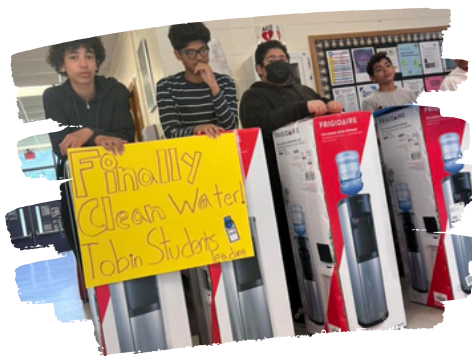
## Water Access Improvements

Our Executive Director, **Ivelisse Caraballo**, and Education Equity Advocate, **Santiago Rivera**, played crucial roles in collaborating with BPS to replace outdated water bubblers with modern filtration systems. Now, 50 schools are equipped with these stations, with plans to complete installation in remaining schools over the next few years. This effort was supported by MassDEP and the Sholomo Foundation.



## Community Outreach & Education

At the same time, CPLAN's team spread the word about the Water Smart Program offered through MassDEP. **Elsa Flores**, our Education Equity Advocate, distributed materials to around 700 parents, 95 students, and 17 schools. Our presence at key community events, including the Family To Family Conference and the Union Capital Boston Resources Fair, helped us educate families about the importance of clean water and available resources. **Lucy Wickings**, another Education Equity Advocate, expanded outreach through digital communications. We targeted childcare centers across Greater Boston, reaching out via email to 55 staff members and making phone calls to 25 centers to inform them about the benefits of the program. Additionally, we have donated 400 water bottles to the Madison Park Technical Vocational High School athletics department.





**UNITED  
PARENT LEADERS  
ACTION NETWORK**

# National Advocacy



As partners of United Parent Leaders Action Network (UPLAN), CPLAN attended the 2024 annual UPLAN conference, strengthening our commitment to advocating for inclusive policies that empower families and support student success.

Together with parent leaders nationwide, we:

- **Shared strategies** for creating positive school cultures.
- **Met with policymakers** on Capitol Hill to advocate for key family-centered policies.

## National Advocacy Key Focus Areas



### Parent & Family Engagement

- Advocated for state and federal policies to strengthen partnerships between families and schools.
- Supported increased funding for programs that promote authentic family engagement through Title 1 funding.



### Early Child Care

- **Child Tax Credit:** Urged support for the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024.
- **Early Care and Education:** Promoted policies to increase accessible, high-quality early education and secure federal funding for early childhood programs.



### Immigration

- **Immigration Registry:** Supported renewing the Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929.
- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA):** Called for the passage of the American Dream and Promise Act to protect millions of DREAMers.
- **Lift the Bar Act:** Advocated for access to vital benefits (Medicaid, SNAP, TANF) for immigrant families.
- **Cultivate Pathways:** Bringing a resource to help support undocumented students in accessing opportunities to attend college and apply for funding.



## Leadership Representation


**Ivelisse Caraballo**, CPLAN's Executive Director, serves as a member of UPLAN's Immigration Policy Committee, reinforcing our voice in national advocacy efforts.

# Families Reached

1,700+ Families





This year, CPLAN expanded its reach and deepened its impact by connecting with families, educators, and community partners through workshops, conferences, and collaborative initiatives.



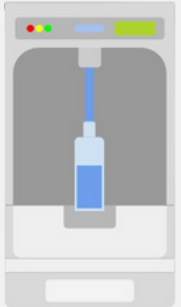
**33** “Powerful Parents” or “Padres poderosos”



**16** Pathways to Parent Leadership Grads



**950+** Reusable water bottles distributed to students to raise awareness about using water filtration systems



**50+** Water filtration systems installed in Boston Public Schools, with remaining schools scheduled for installation in 2025.

*We also distributed materials about clean water access to around 700 parents, 95 students, 17 schools and 25 child care centers!*

## Strengthening Academic Partnerships

- Partnered with **Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health** to increase students' understanding of local, community-led public health efforts.
- Collaborated with **UMass Boston Counseling & Psychology Department** to develop culturally appropriate content for engaging non-mental health professionals and to provide CPLAN with valuable program insights.





# Strengthening School Site & Advisory Councils

This year, CPLAN focused on supporting and empowering parent leadership through coaching and guidance to establish and sustain parent-led councils. These efforts created meaningful opportunities for families to influence school policies and decision-making processes, ensuring student success remains at the center.

## School Site Councils

Coached parent leaders in establishing and sustaining school site councils at:

- Manthala George Jr Elementary School
- Brockton High School
- Gilmore Elementary School (26 members)

## District Advisory Councils

### **Brockton District Parent Advisory Council (DIPAC):**

- CPLAN provided critical administrative support, including meeting facilitation, technical resources, and outreach strategies, contributing to an engaged council with 13 members.

### **Worcester Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC):**

- Our support led to increased membership and participation, empowering families to advocate for special education resources and services effectively.

## Decision Making

### **CPLAN has leaders that sit on the following decision making councils:**

- DESE's Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council
- Chair of Brockton's district wide Parent Advisory Council
- Member of the Boston District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)
- Member of Boston Community Engagement Advisory Council (CEAC)
- Boston Coalition for Education Equity
- Member of UPLAN's National Immigration Policy Committee
- Board member of Brockton Coordinated Family Community Engagement (CFCE)

# 2025 Goals

As we continue our mission to push for equitable education, our focus is on four core goals that will shape our journey in 2025. These objectives reflect our commitment to fostering greater parent and community engagement in school councils, advancing racial equity in education, and empowering families with the knowledge and tools to drive meaningful policy changes.



## 01. Expand Active School Site Councils

Our primary goal in 2025 is to significantly increase the number of active School Site Councils across the communities we serve. We aim to establish strong partnerships between schools and families, fostering meaningful collaboration to enhance the educational experiences for all students.



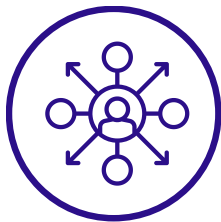
## 02. Coach Existing School Councils

In addition to creating new School Site Councils, we are dedicated to providing coaching and support to existing ones. We will work closely with these councils to strengthen their capabilities, ensuring they are empowered to create positive change within their schools.



## 03. Equity Workshops for Informed Advocacy

To ensure that families are well-informed and equipped to participate in School Site Councils, we intend to expand our racial equity workshops. These workshops will serve as a foundation for advocacy efforts, enabling families to push for equitable policies within their schools and districts.



## 04. Expanding our Reach

We've received a request to collaborate with Healy Families Initiative in Somerville, where the majority of families primarily speak Portuguese. We will be training a mother to take a leadership role in her very own community. This mom will be trained in our workshops to translate into Portuguese gain the skills needed to facilitate sessions in Portuguese. This initiative will enable us to extend our services to this distinct population while continuing to grow parent leaders.

# Supporters & Partners

Throughout 2024 collaboration remained at our core. We formed so many new partnerships with families, educators, and educational organizations that share our mission- empowering parents and making sure all students have access to a high quality education that prepares them for success in life.

From new families, to new districts and communities, we found strength in unity!



**CPLAN**  
Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network

**WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!**



# Our Funders

A special thank you to our funders. This work wouldn't have been possible without your generous support and your belief in our work!



## Shlomo Fund

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## Contact Us

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**STAY WOKE  
JUST VOTE  
ELECTION  
2024**

**POWERED BY:  
CPLAN**  
Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network

**OUR SPECIAL SPEAKERS**  
Featuring a Community Leader & Community Voices Round Table Discussion on OCT 30TH @ 7 PM

**30TH OCT**  
LIVE Studio Audience  
STARTS AT 6:00 PM

**WELCOME TO OUR TOWN HALL FORUM**  
Join us at our studios for a night of networking, learning and empowerment as we discuss the Ballot Questions & what is at stake locally in the upcoming Nov 5th Elections.

**Speakers:**  
Yvelisse Caraballo, Executive Director of CPLAN  
Georgina Barreras, Community leader  
Jorge Vega, Jose Chavez, School of Brookline  
School Committee, Ward 1

**Government Moderator:**  
Charlaine Hill, Mayor

