



Boston School Committee Meeting

February 3, 2010

*The following is a brief summary of the public meeting of the Boston School Committee held on **February 3, 2010** at 6:00 p.m. in the Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street, Boston. This summary is not intended to serve as official minutes of the meeting.*

For more information about any of the items listed below, contact the office of the Boston School Committee: feedback@boston.k12.ma.us or 617-635-9014.

CALL TO ORDER

School Committee members present: Rev. Gregory G. Groover (Chairperson); Marchelle Raynor (Vice Chairperson); John Barros; Claudio Martinez; Michael O'Neill; Mary Tamer; and Michael Davis (Student Rep.).

Absent: Alfreda Harris.

Rev. Groover called the meeting to order.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The Boston Arts Academy Spiritual Ensemble performed two Negro spiritual songs in honor of Black History Month.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Johnson lauded the success of BPS' Parent University Winter Session, which welcomed 250 parents to Northeastern University's campus on January 30. She thanked Assistant Superintendent for Family & Student Engagement Michele Brooks, her staff, and their many partners for their hard work and support. <http://bostonpublicschools.org/node/3860>

Last week, Dr. Johnson attended the launch of the East Boston Historical Society, a student-led historical society founded by students at the Umana Middle School Academy in collaboration with the Boston Museum. <http://allaboutbps.blogspot.com/2010/02/umana-students-launch-east-boston.html>

On February 10, BPS will host a celebratory event at Symphony Hall to kick off the planning stage of the Arts Expansion Initiative. Last fall, BPS received a significant planning grant from the Wallace Foundation to embark on an 18 month planning process. The kick off event will bring together community partners, funders, educators, and school leaders to provide early input in the planning process. Jazz musician Stan Strickland will perform. For more information, please email artsfund@edvestors.org.

The Round One registration deadline for students in transitional grades (ex. Grade 5, Grade 8) to submit continuous choice forms has been extended from February 5 to February 12 in order to provide families with additional time to consider their full range of options. This deadline extension does not apply to students who are registering in BPS for the first time (ex. Kindergarten Registration). Dr. Johnson noted that BPS has new programming options for English Language Learners (ELL), and said the deadline extension will help ensure that ELL families are fully informed of program options. She added that families will be notified via Connect-Ed message, which will be translated into multiple languages.

As part of her ongoing update on the progress of the Acceleration Agenda with a focus Turnaround Schools, Dr. Johnson met with Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, on February 2. Commissioner Chester indicated that the state could release its preliminary list of Level 4 (underperforming) schools as early as the first week of March. Dr. Johnson and her staff plan to meet with faculty and

staffs in the Turnaround Schools to discuss the possible impact for them in the coming months.

<http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/agenda>

Dr. Johnson made the following personnel announcements: two employees from the department of Special Education and Related Services, Senior Director Carolyn Riley and Director of Comprehensive Services Bill Kelley, will retire this spring; she hopes to announce a new Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and a new Literacy and Curriculum Director at the February 24 School Committee meeting.

ACTION ITEMS (VOTES)

Approved: A grant, totaling \$487,838.00

REPORTS

Fiscal Year 2011 Preliminary Budget Presentation: BPS Chief Financial Officer John McDonough presented the Superintendent's preliminary FY 2011 budget recommendation to the School Committee. The proposed budget, in the amount of \$809.7 million, represents a one percent decrease from the district's current appropriation of \$817.8 million. Mr. McDonough noted that while other City departments have received target appropriations with five percent reductions, BPS received a target reduction of one percent for Fiscal Year 2011, a reflection of Mayor Menino's commitment to public education. Mr. McDonough explained that rising costs left BPS with an initial gap of \$57.7 million, but that gap has been reduced to \$32.5 million after significant central and school-based reductions. Options for closing the remaining budget gap include: additional central reductions, collective bargaining, modifications to transportation/student assignment, program changes, and school closings. Dr. Johnson noted that BPS has no specific plans to close schools at this time, but stated that, due to the severity of the district's financial challenges, BPS must be open to all potential revenue-saving options. At the same time, Dr. Johnson affirmed her commitment to providing all students with a quality public education, and noted that the proposed budget includes key investments in areas that support the Acceleration Agenda, such as ELL and Special Education. Dr. Johnson and the Committee invite families, community members, staff, students and others to attend any of the upcoming budget hearings to offer feedback on the preliminary budget proposal. A schedule of hearings, the proposed Fiscal Year 2011 budget and related documents can be found on the district's web site www.bostonpublicschools.org/budget. The public is encouraged to email any cost saving or revenue generating ideas to feedback@bostonpublicschools.org.

NEW BUSINESS

Rev. Groover congratulated Claudio Martinez on being named one of Massachusetts' most influential people in the Latino community by *El Planeta*.

Rev. Groover announced that Alfreda Harris will be honored at the Women of Color: Changing Our World celebration at Prince Hall in Dorchester on February 18.

Rev. Groover invited BPS parents, students, teachers and other stakeholders to attend the FY 2011 budget hearings. The first hearing will take place on February 9 at 6 p.m. at the Harbor Middle School in Dorchester.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee adjourned to Executive Session to conduct a strategy session with respect to collective bargaining. Rev. Groover stated that the Committee would not return to public session.