



## Boston School Committee Meeting

September 2, 2009

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*The following is a brief summary of the public meeting of the Boston School Committee held on **Wednesday, September 2, 2009** at 6:00 p.m., in the Edward Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street. 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](mailto:feedback@boston.k12.ma.us) or 617-635-9014.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

School Committee members present: Rev. Groover (Chairperson); Ms. Raynor (Vice Chairperson); Ms. Dájer; Ms. Harris; Mr. Martinez and Mr. O'Neill.

School Committee Chairperson Reverend Groover called the meeting to order.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

During July and August staff and students throughout the Boston Public Schools (BPS) were hard at work. For the first time, BPS held summer academic programs for K1 and K2 students. The Summer Transition Program was extended to students in Grades 4 and 5, serving over 4,000 students. The summer Review Program for high school students served almost 900 students, with most earning credit for one or two academic courses, while other students just a few credits short of graduation participated in online Credit Recovery programs. On August 27, two hundred BPS students, representing 24 high schools, earned their diplomas at a special summer graduation ceremony held at White Stadium. Other summer activities included Advanced Placement Training for teachers, A+ Summer Academy at Boston University, and the Summer Bridge math program at Wentworth University.

In the last couple of weeks, BPS has shifted from summer enrichment to preparation for school opening on September 8 for teachers, September 10 for students in grades 1-12, and September 14 for Kindergarten students.

Teachers new to Boston Public Schools participated in New Teacher Orientation August 25-27, at UMass Boston. During the orientation, they heard from former principal Bill Henderson about the importance of emphasizing the positive, both to themselves and to the community at large, when it comes to working in our schools.

Central Office staff, led by the Office of Communications, hosted the fourth annual Open House for principals and headmasters on August 28. All departments welcomed school leaders with food, prizes, and valuable tools and resources to bring back to their schools.

BPS has been welcoming students and families to a new school year with a variety of back-to-school celebrations, including the annual Countdown to Kindergarten event at the Boston Children's Museum (8/31) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Back-to-School Jamboree (9/5). On August 16, the district welcomed incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students with its first Middle O! middle school orientation at Fenway Park. <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/welcome>

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has released statewide MCAS results. District results should be released later this month. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=4990>

Dr. Johnson highlighted a number new school leaders and central office staff, as well as leaders who have changed their placements in the district.

Dr. Johnson clarified some points regarding the recent article in the *Boston Globe* about the Five Zone plan. Dr. Johnson expressed to the reporter that BPS was applying for a technical assistance grant and would like an opportunity to utilize the resources that this grant could provide, so Dr. Johnson said she would not be bringing a plan to the School Committee this fall. The reporter translated this as “putting aside” the plan, which is not the case.

## **ACTION ITEMS (VOTES)**

The School Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Board of Trustees of Health Careers Academy Charter School to change the name of the school to the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers – A Horace Mann Charter Public School in memory of the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy, effective upon approval by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/node/3645>

Approved: Grants totaling \$4,816,355

## **REPORTS**

*Welcome Services:* Senior Director of Welcome Services Denise Snyder presented a report on the district’s work over the past year to welcome families and support transitions. Ms. Snyder highlighted 25 recent school-based and district-wide back-to-school events, including the new Middle O! orientation for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Moving forward, Welcome Services will continue to support school choice communications and Kindergarten and middle school transitions, and will generate plans for transition support for high school entrance and for students entering a school mid-grade or mid-year.

*H1N1 Influenza Update:* Senior Director of Special Education & Related Services Carolyn Riley provided an update on H1N1 influenza and the BPS plan for flu season. The Centers for Disease Control and the US Department of Education have provided additional guidance for districts around limiting transmission of influenza with the goal of keeping schools open and functional. BPS will continue to emphasize prevention measures to students and staff, including frequent hand washing, covering coughs, and staying home when ill. At this time there is no plan for mass vaccination at schools. BPS officials continue to meet weekly with officials from the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) to plan for flu season.

*English Language Learners:* Assistant Superintendent for English Language Learners Dr. Eileen de los Reyes presented the district’s plan to support the language and academic achievement of English Language Learners. The plan includes investing \$4.2 million per year in American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds over the next two school years in materials, formative assessments, school-based translation services, ESL specialists and ESL teachers, and professional development as well as leveraging existing strengths and resources to address the ELL access gap. School Committee member Claudio Martinez also provided an overview of the ELL Task Force, charged by the School Committee and co-chaired by Mr. Martinez and Klare Shaw, Senior Advisor for Education, Art and Culture at the Barr Foundation.

The Vocational Requirements Update on the agenda was postponed until an upcoming meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Reverend Groover announced that Vice-Chairperson Marchelle Raynor would take a leadership role in bringing the findings of the Council of the Great City Schools report on Special Education in BPS to the community and in providing leadership in moving the district’s Special Education work forward.

Dr. Johnson noted that the King K-8 celebration on September 3 would feature an announcement that the Chef in Schools program would be expanding. Dr. Johnson also thanked the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Academic Officer for their work and leadership in preparing the district for the new school year.

Marchelle Raynor reminded everyone about Saturday’s Back-to-School Jamboree and announced that Countdown to Kindergarten has a newly redesigned website at [www.countdowntokindergarten.org](http://www.countdowntokindergarten.org).