

Boston School Committee Meeting

December 2, 2009

*The following is a brief summary of the public meeting of the Boston School Committee held on **Wednesday, December 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 or 617-635-9014.

CALL TO ORDER

School Committee members present: Rev. Gregory G. Groover (Chairperson); Marchelle Raynor (Vice Chairperson); Helen Dájer; Alfreda Harris; Claudio Martinez; Michael O'Neill; and Michael Davis (Student Representative).

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Johnson welcomed everyone back from the Thanksgiving holiday with some football news.

- The East Boston High School and Brighton High School football teams will go to the Super Bowl on Saturday, December 5. http://www.boston.com/sports/schools/football/articles/2009/12/02/eastie_has_an_easy_time/
- The *Boston Herald* featured an English High student on the front page the day before Thanksgiving. <http://bostonherald.com/sports/columnists/view.bg?articleid=1214395>
- On October 1 the Irving and Gavin competed in the first championship game for the new Middle School Football League, and the Irving students are the new middle school champs.

Dr. Yu-Lan Lin, Senior Program Director for World Languages, recently received the 2010 Nelson H. Brooks Award from the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/node/3783>

Elan Trotman, the music specialist at the Mozart and Philbrick Elementary Schools, has been nominated for Jazz Act of the Year at the Boston Music Awards, which take place December 2.

Dr. Johnson highlighted the Marshall Elementary School community's response following a shooting incident in the community center located in the school two weeks ago. A team of people from Children's Hospital, Boston School Police, Boston Public Health Commission, and the Boston Police Department came to the school the next day to support students and staff. One hundred percent of the staff showed up that day, as did volunteers from Generations Inc. who came to tutor students. Dr. Johnson also acknowledged the work of Sam DePina, Assistant Chief Operating Officer, and Carolyn Riley, Senior Director of Special Education & Related Services, in organizing the support teams and keeping lines of communication open.

In an effort to encourage families to continue to choose the Boston Public Schools (BPS) as they transition from elementary school to middle school and on to high school, BPS and the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) on December 1 held "Next Stop: High School" and "Next Stop: Middle School" at the BTU hall. During the first event, high school headmasters shared information about their schools with middle and K-8 school principals, while at the second, middle school principals shared information about their schools with elementary school principals. The goal of these sessions was to make sure principals of students in transition grades are informed of all the choices available to their students in BPS schools. Additionally, thanks to Welcome Services, every 8th grader will receive their own "Next Stop: High School" guide, containing information about the high school options available to them as well as information about how to choose schools.

On December 1, Dr. Johnson and Rev. Groover attended an event celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE). The BPE recently announced the formation of a new consortium of Boston charter, private, parochial, public schools and METCO to share best practices and improve education for all students. <http://www.bpe.org/>

Dr. Johnson has received emails from several individuals who served as Principals for a Day on November 18 sharing their positive experiences in BPS schools.

ACTION ITEMS (VOTES)

Approved: Grants, totaling \$1,174,097

REPORTS

Five-year Acceleration Agenda Update: Dr. Johnson provided an update on the overview of the five-year strategic direction for the BPS that she presented at the November 18 School Committee meeting. Dr. Johnson reviewed some of the key initiatives and strategies and the Committee provided feedback on the working draft. Dr. Johnson plans to return at the December 16 meeting with more details about the plan as well as specific recommendations for action steps. www.bostonpublicschools.org/agenda.

Madison Park Admission Policy: Dr. Johnson presented a proposal for a new admission policy to Madison Park Technical Vocational High School based on guidelines developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The current policy allows for sibling and 50% walk zone priority and sets aside programmatic seats for some students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The proposed policy would make Madison Park open to all students citywide through a lottery; students with disabilities and English Language Learners would receive any necessary services at the school. The School Committee will vote on the new policy at an upcoming meeting.

FY 2010 – 2011 Budget Update: Chief Financial Officer (CFO) John McDonough gave an update on the BPS FY 2010 and FY 2011 budgets. In addition to sharing a snapshot of the current year spending and allocations, Mr. McDonough presented some of the expected revenue and expenditure changes for FY11, as well as a framework of how the district will direct resources to align with the academic priorities of the *Acceleration Agenda*. For FY10, BPS is facing revenue and expenditure pressures but is on track to balance the budget. Looking ahead to FY11, budget development will face a gap due to cost increases, grant reductions and restrictions, and increased investments in academic priorities, and the district will need to maximize existing resources and pursue new resources in order to achieve a balanced budget.

Education Resource Strategies Overview: Mr. McDonough and Karen Hawley Miles, founder and director of the non-profit consulting firm Education Resource Strategies (ERS), shared an overview of the work ERS has been doing over the past five months to provide a systematic review of the budget to support the district in better aligning the district's resources with its key strategies.