



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE HYBRID BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 15, 2023

The Boston School Committee held a hybrid meeting on November 15, 2023 at 6 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, School Committee Chamber, Roxbury, Massachusetts. The meeting was also live streamed on [Boston City TV](#) and on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee, email esullivan3@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chair Jeri Robinson; Vice Chair Michael D. O'Neill; Stephen Alkins; Brandon Cardet-Hernandez; Chantal Lima Barbosa; Quoc Tran; and Student Representative Diego Mehta.

School Committee Member Absent: Rafaela Polanco Garcia.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Meeting Minutes: November 1, 2023

Grants for Approval Totaling \$505,820

Long-term Facilities Plan Rubric and Decision-Making Tool Memo

Long-Term Facilities Planning: School Design Study Equity Impact Statement

Boston Public Schools Long-term Facilities Planning PowerPoint

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jeri Robinson called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. She said that tonight's meeting was being live streamed on Boston City TV and on Zoom. It will be rebroadcast and the video will be posted at bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee and on YouTube. She announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available virtually in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cabo Verdean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and American Sign

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Language (ASL). Translated meeting documents were posted at bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the November 1, 2023 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you Chairperson Robinson and good evening. I’d like to start my Superintendent’s Report by encouraging our families to participate in School Preview Time for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year. School Preview Time is an annual opportunity for families to visit the Boston Public Schools schools and learn more about what makes our school communities so special. We encourage families to visit Discover BPS on our website where parents and caregivers can add their address and the grade they are looking for to explore their list of schools. We also suggest and welcome them to tour schools and meet school leaders and their staff at our in-person school information sessions. For families that cannot make it in person, schools are also holding virtual information sessions. Both in-person and online sessions are being held this month and through December and January. All of this information can be found at bostonpublicschools.org/schoolpreview.

Another great opportunity to meet school leaders and their staff and learn about schools is at the annual BPS Showcase of Schools event on Saturday, December 2nd here at the Bolling Building from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Pre-registration is not required. I have always loved the Showcase of Schools because it allows families to learn about all of the great things our BPS schools have to offer students and families - including programs, leadership and school culture - in one place. Families can learn more about specific schools, get answers to their registration questions, and meet school leaders, staff and students from all of our schools. I hope to see and meet our families there. For families needing transportation to the showcase, we will have free BPS bus pick up and drop off from Brighton, East Boston, South Boston, Hyde Park, Charlestown, and Mattapan and other locations to the Bolling Building. BPS family liaisons will make the information available to school communities and it will also be shared on social media, through robocalls, on flyers and on the BPS website.

I’d also like to highlight some important dates that are also on the website:

- Priority registration for K0, K1 and grades 6,7 and 9 will be held January 4th through February 9th

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- Priority registration for K2 and all other grades will be held between February 12th and April 5th

We know this process may be unfamiliar or overwhelming for some of our families. In addition to the information on our website, if you have any questions you can call our Welcome Center at 617-635-9010 or email welcome services at [bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:welcome@bostonpublicschools.org). We are ready to support our families as they navigate the registration process!

I also want to note that this time of year marks the start of the BPS budget season. The release of school budgets is currently on track for the second week of December. My team and I have been meeting regularly to plan for the FY25 budget. We know we must continue the work we did last year to transition ESSER dollars to the general fund where appropriate. The finance team is working on the long term sustainability of our investments that are supporting the outcomes we want for our students. The work we did last year to begin this transition was critical and this year we are focused on looking at what we are currently funding in addition to any new proposals to make sure the investments for FY25 are aligned with our key priorities. The FY25 Budget must be a budget that builds a solid foundation for all the work we have to do to close opportunity and achievement gaps, deliver on our inclusive education plan and create the types of physical spaces our students deserve to help them learn and grow. We must be strategic in how we prioritize where our resources go, especially as we prepare for the upcoming fiscal landscape. We will continue to keep our most vulnerable students - especially our Black and Brown Students with Disabilities and Multilingual Learners - at the center of all of our decisions throughout the budget process. We look forward to coming back to the School Committee on December 13 when the BPS budget team will provide a financial update, which will include information on ESSER, and share our FY25 priorities as well as updated enrollment data.

A few quick Bright spots to share: Last night I attended the Boston Education Fund (BEDF)'s inaugural fundraiser organized to recognize, celebrate and appreciate the efforts of educators. The event was held to support EdEquity Boston, which is an initiative dedicated to advancing educational equity in Boston. I was honored to speak at the event and give special recognition alongside BTU President Tang and BEDF Executive Director Pam Leins to the 2023 Educators of the Year. I look forward to celebrating them and their accomplishments at the next School Committee meeting on December 6.

Last week on November 8, East Boston High School was awarded the EdVestors \$100,000 School on the Move Prize. The Prize recognizes the schools, leaders, and teachers who create and continuously improve learning environments where all students can thrive. I am so proud of school leader Phil Brangiforte and his team for their incredible work. East Boston High School is one of the district's largest secondary schools, and serves a majority-Latinx student body from the surrounding neighborhood. Despite at one time being on the brink of state takeover, East Boston High School has been recognized for its efforts to strengthen instruction over the past decade. With the implementation of graduate-level professional development for teachers, an equitable

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grading policy, and after-school and summer credit recovery programs, East Boston High School's graduation rate, state ranking, and attendance have all risen steadily despite the pandemic. No one can beat their school spirit. Congratulations, Phil, your team and the entire Eastie High community.

I also want to mention the great work of runners up Boston Green Academy and school leader Matt Holtzer and Fenway High School and school leader Geoff Walker. Their school communities received awards of \$20,000 - double the usual amount thanks to a generous anonymous donor. Congratulations to BGA and Fenway and their teams as well.

I want to take a moment to congratulate Fenway High School librarian Bonnie McBride on receiving the 2023 Massachusetts Super Librarian Award from the Massachusetts School Library Association. This award recognizes exemplary school librarians across the state who have distinguished themselves through library programs that enhance student learning and who contribute to improving school libraries through professional development, leadership, service and advocacy. Our young people get a constant flow of information from many different sources. It can be difficult to navigate and separate fact from opinion and outright fiction. Our librarians are a valuable resource for our students as they learn the difference. Congratulations, Bonnie, and thank you for all you do.

Legendary Trotter Elementary School teacher Alma Wright was honored by Action for Boston Community Development last week with the organization's Community Hero Award. Now retired, Ms. Wright was a BPS teacher for 56 years - 51 of them at the Trotter. Congratulations, Ms. Wright, on this well-deserved recognition and thank you for your decades of dedication to BPS students.

On Monday, I had the pleasure of meeting with a group of mostly African-American leaders who are community partners, supporting our black and brown students through an array of programming opportunities for our youth. The meeting was part of my ongoing Community Engagement tour. I have the opportunity to speak with leaders, all of whom are part of the communities they serve. As I spend time with each of the communities, I look forward to sharing more about what I am hearing and learning to better serve our students and their families.

I'd like to end tonight with some good news from BPS Athletics:

- O'Bryant and English won their respective Divisions of the Boston City Cheerleading Championship
- Boston International Boys Soccer advanced to the Division 5 MIAA Final Four. Unfortunately, they lost 2-0 last night vs Westport, but we are so proud of how far their hard work took them!

I hope you will attend one of our exciting Thanksgiving football match-ups next week:

- Brighton vs. TechBoston - Tuesday November 21 at 5:00 p.m. at Fenway Park

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- BLS vs. English - Thursday, November 23 at 10:00 a.m. at Harvard Stadium in Cambridge
- Latin Academy vs. O'Bryant - Thursday, November 23 at 10:00 a.m. at Madison Park
- Excel vs. East Boston - Thursday, November 23 at 10:00 a.m. at East Boston Stadium

This concludes my report. I turn it back to you madam Chair.

Mr. O'Neill commended EdVestors for selecting three high schools as finalists for the 2023 School on the Move Prize. He congratulated 2023 School on the Move Prize winner East Boston High School for its strong sense of camaraderie and collaboration.

Ms. Robinson spoke about her recent visit to Boston Leadership Academy (BCLA)/McCormack 7-12 School with Mr. O'Neill last week. She praised the staff and students for their hospitality and thoughtful reflections, and expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of the building. She expressed disappointment that some of the promises made to support the merged school facility have not yet come to fruition. She said that as the Green New Deal enters its next phase, it's critically important that the district be honest and deliver on its promises.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez asked if there is a shift in the district's thinking around informed school choice, such as offering a tool that provides families with high quality information about school offerings. The Superintendent said that her team is looking to make the existing online tool more robust. The Secondary Office is working to update school profiles in time for the upcoming school choice registration season and is exploring virtual school tours. In addition, the district is overhauling the BPS website to make it more user friendly.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez said that he will continue to push the district to localize the 10 bonus points as part of the exam schools admissions policy and to establish an agreement with the state that provides BPS with economic information about non-BPS exam school applicants.

The Superintendent said that Chair Robinson and Vice Chair O'Neill have been clear that they would like the district to explore a change to policy, even if it is incremental, and that her team is actively doing so. She said that finding a clean way to confirm individual socioeconomic data for non-BPS students would likely take more time beyond the current application season. She said that she would provide an update to the Committee at a meeting in the near future. The district is in conversations with some graduate schools about potentially providing the district with data support. Mr. Cardet-Hernandez urged BPS to communicate with families during School Preview and School Choice Season that changes to the policy are a possibility.

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Dr. Alkins requested the simulations of impact of the 10 bonus points that the district presented to the Exam Schools Admissions Policy Task Force. Assistant Superintendent of Data Strategy and Implementation Monica Hogan said she would follow up with the information.

Ms. O'Neill described the BCLA/McCormack facilities situation as benign neglect, saying that while district leadership and staff have changed, promises were made that must be fulfilled. He said that the school community would benefit from both long-term and short-term facilities renovations. The Superintendent spoke about the impact of having multiple mayors and multiple superintendent in a seven-year span. She said the Green New Deal brings a sense of urgency to providing students with facilities that support high quality education. Once the long-term plan is adopted, it will serve as the blueprint for the district to follow regardless of who sits in leadership roles.

Approved - The Committee approved the Superintendent's Report by unanimous consent.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Andrew Pierre, Roslindale resident and Boston Latin School student, testified regarding providing a diverse curriculum and asked the district to hold events that provide students with safe spaces to discuss world events.

The following people testified with concerns about the exam schools admissions policy:

- Rebecca Knight, South End resident and Eliot K-8 Innovation School parent
- Kerry Akashian, North End resident and Eliot K-8 Innovation School parent
- Matt Sly, Jamaica Plain resident and BPS parent
- Deirdre Manning, Dorchester resident and BPS and charter school parent
- Laurel Millette, downtown resident and BPS parent

John Mudd, Cambridge resident and advocate, testified regarding a master facilities plan

Tony Kind, Milton resident and Boston International High School Newcomers Academy (BINCA) head of school, thanked Committee members for their service and invited them to visit BINCA.

The following people testified concerning funding and stability for the Henderson K-12 Inclusion School's after school program:

- Courtney Feeley Karp, Roslindale resident and Henderson K-12 Inclusion School parent
- Roy Karp, Roslindale resident and Henderson K-12 Inclusion School parent
- Jessica Butler, Dorchester resident and Henderson K-12 Inclusion School parent
- Keyona Aviles, Dorchester resident and Henderson K-12 Inclusion School parent

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Benjamin Allen, Jamaica Plain resident and John F. Kennedy Elementary School parent, testified regarding the Green New Deal decision-making rubric.

Ruby Reyes, Dorchester resident and Boston Education Justice Alliance (BEJA) executive director, testified regarding facilities.

Ann Chinchilla DeGeorge, Roxbury resident and Boston Latin Academy parent, testified with concerns about family engagement.

Mike Heichman, Dorchester resident and BEJA member, testified regarding School Committee meeting procedures and a number of educational issues.

Jean Powers, Allston resident and Gardner Pilot Academy parent, testified regarding the school's transition from a K-8 to a K-6.

Edith Bazile, Hyde Park resident and advocate, testified regarding Black educators.

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. O'Neill thanked staff at the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and School Committee staff for working together to thoroughly review and compile School Committee policies.

Approved - The Committee approved unanimous consent the payment of membership dues to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees for SY 2023-2024 in the amount of \$8,635.

Dr. Alkins asked questions about the Play as an Instructional Practice for 21st CCLC and Playful Learning Institute, Preschool through 3rd Grade grants. He asked how the district is evaluating professional development success in terms of implementation and student outcomes. Interim Executive Director for Early Childhood Tiara Dias said that the program uses a fidelity tool to look at the adherence in quality. Data is collected as part of the evaluation for professional development. Dr. Alkins suggested that the district make available a repository of grants that is public-facing so that families can see investments that are being made in schools and their outcomes.

Mr. O'Neill asked about the MassGrad Promising Practices -BINCA grant. Boston International High School Newcomers Academy (BINCA) Head of School Tony King explained that the grant will support attendance and coaching efforts and help students develop their mastery of tasks and competencies.

Approved - The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$505,820.

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REPORT

Capital Planning Update: Education and Design Specifications and Update on Rubric - Chief of Capital Planning Delavern Stanislaus, Senior Advisor to the Mayor for Youth and Schools Rebecca Grainger, and Director of Data and Strategy for Capital Planning Emanuel Zanzerkia present an update on the district's Long-Term Facilities Plan and the decision-making rubric, a tool will be used to guide decisions on where resources are invested in facilities to support making the BPS High-Quality Student Experience a district-wide reality. All students and families are able to access buildings that support the High-Quality Student Experience close to home.

Building Models define the ideal set of spaces needed for pre-K-6 and 7-12 school buildings to support the High-Quality Student Experience. BPS, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, has developed four different building models:

- Small PreK-6 (~356 students)
- Large PreK-6 (~712 students)
- Small 7-12 (~650 students) * *represents the size of many of current buildings, however is not a Building Model*
- Medium 7-12 (~1150 students)
- Large 7-12 (~1620 students)

Not every school building should or will fit a building model, but building models will serve as a guide for future new or renovated PreK-6 or 7-12 schools. The Building Experience Score assesses how well BPS buildings can currently support the High-Quality Student Experience. The metrics that make up the Building Experience Score include data from school walkthroughs, site plans, and the Facilities Conditions Assessment. Building models are made up of learning cohorts (a group of students) that share new opportunities for learning, development, and collaboration, including more classrooms per grade, including general classrooms and substantially separate spaces, more specialty classrooms for art, music, science, and Career & Technical Education, more resources for therapeutic and pull-out spaces, and community hub programming. Building models offer students a range of high quality enrichment opportunities, including science labs, specialty classrooms for the arts, and outdoor space.

Of the 119 BPS school buildings analyzed, 71 school buildings/sites have the potential to fit at least one building model; 48 school buildings/sites do not easily fit a building model - more analysis is required. The rubric evaluates whether each school building/site could fit a building model through renovation of existing building, addition & renovation of existing building, a new building on site, or by creating a two-campus school. The rubric takes into consideration an assessment of existing building conditions, proposed investments, and impacts.

The presenters conducted a simulation of the rubric using the facilities in the Allston-Brighton area as an example. The team is currently working on a public-facing dashboard. Dr. Alkins suggested that in addition to the demographics of a school, the tool should also consider the

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history of renovations at each school building. The Superintendent said that the data shows the divestment in certain areas of the city.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez asked for more clarity about the problem that the district is trying to solve. Ms. Grainger explained that the tool uses metrics to provide an honest assessment of how students across the district will need to be served in different ways. The Superintendent agreed, adding that the rubric takes an ecosystem view of matching programming with need and the facilities to support them. The Superintendent clarifies for Mr. Cardet-Hernandez that the rubric does not account for school demand data, adding that the team will consider it. She suggested examining wait lists as an indicator of demand.

Mr. O'Neill asked about the Lyon School K-6 building's potential for renovation and how the decision is made about what renovations are possible at a site. Ms. Grainger said a site must be large enough to support the full high-quality student experience, including outdoor space. She said that adding height to an existing facility would require further analysis.

Dr. Alkins suggested that more clarity is needed about where the community has power in the decision making process. Ms. Lima Barbosa requested that the next presentation on the Long-term Facilities Plan include a roadmap of engagement. The Superintendent said that 9,000 survey responses are informing the rubric.

Ms. Grainger said that the team would like to develop a cadence where district leaders spend the fall, winter and early spring using the rubric to develop a short list of proposals and collect feedback from school communities before bringing recommendations to the Committee for a vote. This timeline would provide merging or closing school communities with a full school year of transition planning.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez asked about a strategic long-term master facilities plan. The Superintendent spoke about the district's intensive work to fulfill its commitments as part of the Systemic Improvement Plan (SIP). She said that her team is engaged in ongoing conversations with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) about its progress on creating a long-term master facilities plan. Mr. Cardet-Hernandez suggested that slide 29 of the PowerPoint presentation include the timeline for the work being done now as well as long-term. The Superintendent said that guaranteed funding is a factor in planning. Mr. Cardet-Hernandez suggested that the district not base proposals on potential funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). Ms. Lima Barbosa noted that securing funding often includes many factors that are beyond the district's control.

Ms. Grainger clarified for Dr. Alkins that the decision-making rubric does not measure time but rather supports evidence-based decisions and investments. She said the goal is that every student in Boston Public Schools has a high quality education. The tool will help the district determine how to create those high quality student seats through facilities in a thoughtful way.

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Mr. O’Neill said that the tool allows for decision-making based on data and is student-focused. He said that another track of work should be happening that focuses on enrollment and capacity, adding the builds should be the start of the process. He spoke about the importance of earning the community’s trust. The Superintendent said that her team has been updating DESE every step of the way and have a clear understanding of the facilities plan that the district will submit by December 31.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez said that the absence of a long-term master facilities plan makes it difficult for the School Committee to make tough decisions. The Superintendent said that by spring she expects that her team will be able to provide a sense of the size of the optimal system that the district is working towards.

Ms. Robinson spoke about balancing the needs of school regions with needs citywide. She suggested establishing guardrails about what the district will not do to help families better understand what to expect.

Ms. Grainger said that as a next step, her team will provide the Committee with a memo that incorporates the Committee’s feedback and a more refined timeline. She said that the team also wants to engage with school leaders about the rubric. Ms. Stanislaus said that will share with the Committee themes from the recent community workshops on the rubric. She offered to hold small group or one-on-one conversations with members.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

Approved - At approximately 9:55 p.m. the Committee approved a motion to adjourn to the meeting by unanimous consent.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary