



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**January 10, 2018**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on January 10, 2018 at 6 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, School Committee chamber, Roxbury, Massachusetts. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

### **ATTENDANCE**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael Loconto; Vice Chairperson Hardin Coleman; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Michael O’Neill; Jeri Robinson; and student representative Keondré McClay.

School Committee Members Absent: Regina Robinson; and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

Grants for Approval Totaling 855,360:

- Culture and Climate Change in Nicaragua for English Learners - \$12,500 (Estimated Value)
- Early College Designation Preliminary Grant - \$10,000
- Early College Designation Preliminary Grant - \$10,000
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Emergency Support - \$5,000
- Safe and Supportive Schools Grant - \$10,000
- Strategic Support to Specific Underperforming Schools and Districts - \$450,000
- Strategic Support to Specific Underperforming Schools and Districts - \$49,500
- Title III: English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement Program for English Learners and Immigrant Children and Youth - \$308,360

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School – France – February 15-24, 2018

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School – Italy – February 15-22, 2018

**School Committee Meeting**  
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building  
School Committee Chamber

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International Travel Request: Boston Latin School – Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic – April 10-23, 2018

Margarita Muñiz Innovational Plan Renewal Power Point

Margarita Muñiz Innovational Plan Renewal Equity Impact Statement

Building a Foundation for Success: Boston’s Progress Toward High Quality Universal Pre-K (UPK) Power Point

UPK Equity Impact Statement

## CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Loconto led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order.

## CITATION

The Committee and Superintendent presented a citation to Michael O’Neill in recognition of his strong leadership as chairperson of the School Committee from 2013-2017.

## MEETING MINUTES

*Approved* – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the December 6, 2017, December 13, 2017, and January 3, 2018 Committee meetings.

## SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Good evening everyone. I want to start my report tonight by first extending my congratulations to you, Mr. Loconto, on your selection last Wednesday as the new chairperson of the Boston School Committee. On behalf of all of us in the Boston Public Schools, we look forward to working even more closely with you as you take the helm of this committee whose members are so passionate about improving the lives and education of all of BPS students. I also want to thank Michael O’Neill for his incredible leadership over the past five years as the committee’s chair. We are truly indebted to you for your great contributions and deep commitment to the young people of the city you love so much.

I hope all of you safely weathered Thursday’s snowstorm and managed to stay warm with the Arctic-like weather we experienced. I would like to give a huge shout-out to the hardworking custodians, supervisors, bus-yard crews and members of our Facilities Department who worked long days and nights, and endured frigid temperatures, in order to get our schools and school buses ready for Monday’s return of students and staff. In some schools, crews had to repeatedly shovel, plow and salt the same areas for four straight days due to continuous drifting caused by the unrelenting winds that followed Thursday’s storm.

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To give you a little understanding of what it took to get our 127 school buildings and more than 700 buses back in operation after Thursday's big snowstorm, here are some stats:

- A crew of approximately 500 BPS custodians — operating 200 snow blowers, 130 salt spreaders, 200 ice choppers, 450 shovels, and using 250,000 pounds of salt — cleared some 700 school exit doorways, 750 exterior staircases and 127 bus-drop off locations.
- With the help of a team of contractors equipped with 35 snowplows, they removed snow from more than 5 million square feet of sidewalks and school parking lots — the equivalent of nearly 87 football fields.
- Meanwhile, 95 employees working for our bus operator cleared snow off our fleet of 605 buses and from our four bus yards.

It was certainly a challenging week, which included the city's coldest stretch of temperatures at 20 degrees or below in a century. Starting early on the morning of Tuesday, Jan. 2nd, cold-weather teams arrived at our bus yards at 3 a.m. to warm up our buses while extra mechanics were brought in to handle any cold-related equipment issues. This took place again on Wednesday and Monday mornings. Meanwhile, custodians were busy throughout the weekend monitoring boilers, pipes and temperatures in school buildings to make sure there would be minimal issues for Monday's reopening. Needless to say, there are a lot of tired folks who have been at it for many days. Please take a moment the next time you see one of them to thank them for their hard work.

They've lived legally in the United States for nearly two decades, becoming part of the workforce, starting families, buying homes, paying taxes and making this country their own. Now, more than 200,000 immigrants from El Salvador who were granted Temporary Protected Status after fleeing their country after a devastating 7.7-magnitude quake struck El Salvador in January 2001, could face deportation in two years. In light of the Trump Administration's decision on Monday to rescind the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 200,000 people from El Salvador in September 2019, we want to reinforce our message that the Boston Public Schools (BPS) stands strongly with students, families, and staff of all cultural and linguistic and backgrounds.

We work tirelessly to foster safe, welcoming, and sustaining environments for everyone in our school district, regardless of their immigration status. To that end, the district has updated our BPS: We Dream Together website ([bpswedreamtogether.org](http://bpswedreamtogether.org)), which offers resources on a range of current immigration issues. The website provides information in various languages and factual information about TPS, immigrant rights, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and family preparedness plans. BPS: We Dream Together now has a "TPS Resources" tab at the top of the homepage, where families can find updated information on Temporary Protected Status designations for people from several different countries, including Haiti, Sudan, Nicaragua, Yemen, Somalia, Syria, and Nepal; along with a link to a Department of Homeland Security web page with the latest information. Also included are details on immigration information clinics offered by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement (617-635-2980 or 311) and the Irish International Immigrant Center (617-542-7654).

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In these uncertain times, our message remains the same: BPS and the City of Boston will continue to support families and students of all backgrounds. We will do everything we can to help our students remain focused on learning — both academically and emotionally — and continue to remain a supportive and welcoming environment for all.

Now, onto some bright spots. On Tuesday night, Dorchester Academy held its Senior Awards Dinner at Maggiano's restaurant to celebrate the graduating seniors. I had the opportunity to join Headmaster Freddie Fuentes and Senior Program Director Magdalana Reis students in honoring these students. The school treated the students, their families and special guests to a slideshow, dinner and speeches recognizing these young people for their hard work, dedication and perseverance. The highlight of the night came when senior Brandon Siah delivered the student address, sharing his own story detailing his personal struggle finishing high school. Brandon talked about how with grit and determination he was not only able to finish high school, but that he will be moving on to college in the spring. He thanked the teachers and staff of Dorchester Academy for their guidance and support and congratulated his fellow seniors on their accomplishments. It was a great night to toast the many accomplishments of these young men and women and to reflect on the transformation the school has undergone this year. I want to personally commend this group of students for their resiliency and determination in achieving this goal.

I am proud to announce that the Boston Public Schools has received two grants from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation totaling \$550,000. These grants will go a long way to helping support and improve the quality of our instruction. One of the \$275,000 grants we received will go toward "Building Teacher Leadership." We will use these funds to improve and personalize professional learning for high school teachers. The goal is to empower teacher voice in the process of needs assessment so professional learning is more relevant to their needs. This effort will be led by a "Networker," an innovative new teacher leadership role. The Networker connects teachers with shared learning interests to one another for job-embedded teacher-led professional learning. Along with the district High School Academics Team, the Networker also cultivates and curates best practices aligned to the "Essentials for Instructional Equity," Boston Public Schools' vision for coherent, student-centered learning in all classrooms and schools. I want to thank Paul Tritter, director of professional learning for the BTU, and Shakera Walker, BPS director of teacher development, for leading this important work.

The BPS Office of Innovation has also received a \$275,000 grant from the Nellie Mae Foundation that will be used to design the BPS Innovation Incubator, a personalized process to support school teams in redesigning teaching and learning environments to make them more aligned with our College, Career, and Life definition. The Incubator will be an iterative process that develops screening tools, innovation competencies, self-reflection rubrics, quantitative and qualitative data-gathering methods, and ways for learning to feed back into the district as a whole. As part of the process, School Retool, a redesign organization with roots in Stanford's d.school and Ideo, will provide a cohort- and school-team based professional development fellowship that will grow innovation and collaborative leadership capacity. The Incubator will support 3 cohorts of BPS school teams, reaching a total of 60+ educators I would like to acknowledge Sujata Bhatt, BPS managing partner of Innovation, for spearheading this effort.

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The John F. Kennedy Library Foundation and the GE Foundation have established a scholarship program to assist BPS high school seniors who plan to continue their education in college and major in a STEM field of study. The 2018 program is accepting applications through 2/1/18. Anyone interested in applying can log onto: [www.scholarsapply.org/jfk-ge/](http://www.scholarsapply.org/jfk-ge/)

Please join us tomorrow, Thursday, January 11, for our 36th annual MLK Celebration at the Strand Theatre from 6:30-8:30 PM. Enjoy dance ensembles, acting, spoken-word, and student produced videos as we celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Admission is free and all are welcome.

On Monday, February 12, the BPS Office of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness (SELWell) will be hosting the 3rd annual Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Forum entitled: SEL Matters — Transforming Learning Experiences for ALL. The SEL forum will be taking place at the Northeastern University McLeod Suites from 8am-3:30pm. Throughout the day, participants will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding and learning of Essential #1, Creating and Maintaining Safe, Healthy, & Sustaining Learning Environments for all students. We are also pleased to announce that Zaretta Hammond, best-selling author of “*Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*,” will not only be the keynote speaker at the forum, but will also facilitate a panel series event in the evening at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal building in the evening that will be open to the larger Boston community.

This weekend we celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King. One of his most profound and seminal pieces of writing is “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” written on April 16, 1963 while Dr. King sat in a jail in Birmingham, AL for protests he led against segregation and racism in that city. His letter was a response to an open letter written and published by eight clergymen criticizing Dr. King’s actions. I often pick up this piece of work as I reflect about myself, both as a citizen of this country and as a leader in this community. As we start a new year and enter MLK Weekend, I wish to share a few reflections with you. We live in a country that is diverse racially, culturally, and linguistically. Given our immense diversity, we are relatively not as divided as a country as many other places in the world. But “getting along” should not hide the serious inequities that exist in our society and should not make us complacent about the need for change.

This School Committee understands this reality and that is why you are not satisfied that the Boston Public Schools is a high-achieving urban school district but recognizes serious opportunity and achievement gaps that persist in our system. This body has made the closing of those gaps your driving priority. To harken back to our Theory of Action, In order to close achievement gaps, we will get there when we transform learning so that our students are challenged, engaged, and honored as who they are in their learning. Our students must be taught to communicate, collaborate and think critically and creatively- all 21st century skills. This is the premise of the City of Boston’s CCLR definition as well as Boston Public School’s work on the Essentials of Instructional Equity. Furthermore, we must build a sustainable system by looking head on at the structures that drive inequity in our school system and right them. This

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will also require us to shape the district so it is transparent and predictable for all families, so that each school is viable and has the financial and operational ability to succeed.

Our six key priorities- instructional coherence, adult learning, district reconfiguration, allocating funds more equitably, supporting our lowest performing schools, and improving customer service - aim to transform learning and build a sustainable system. We must not lose our sense of urgency on this work. As Dr. King argues in “Letter from Birmingham Jail” that “For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never."” Change will not come easy. It never does. Dr. King laments in “Letter from Birmingham Jail” that “it is a historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.”

The opportunity and achievement gaps that exist are not the fault of any one person or any one body. It is the collective legacy of years and decades of decisions, policies, and practices that must be deconstructed. I believe it can be done because it is not only a moral imperative but also vitally important for the survival and future success of our democratic, pluralistic society. That is why we cannot allow our disagreements to divide us. There is much to accomplish together to drive out the inequities in our city, to serve as a bright spot of a more perfect union. My commitment to this School Committee and to all our families is to do much better at working alongside parents, school leaders, community partners, students to drive for more equity in the system. BPS will strive always to unite people with both problems and solutions; to do a better job of sharing why our students will benefit from a new policy; to listen so that we can resolve historically inequitable policies so all children can enjoy the benefits of a rigorous and supportive education that prepares them for college and career. We’ll get there together. Thank you School Committee members and our community for being partners in this vital work.

The BPS Office of Human Capital is hosting a Multi-Lingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) Educators Job Fair on Tuesday, March 20 from 5 – 7 p.m. at The English High School in Jamaica Plain. Based on school leader interviews across the district this fall, a clear need is for multi-lingual educators and educators who are certified in ESL.

This event is for the following candidates:

- Teachers certified to teach ESL
- Teachers certified to teach any subject who are also fluent in one of BPS' official languages

This event will consist of information sharing and mini-interviews with school leaders. Within the next two weeks we will begin advertising this event in multiple languages. We are also currently developing advertisements for this event in both English and Spanish directly targeted to Puerto Rican teachers. That concludes my report for this evening.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked the Superintendent for talking about Dr. King and expressing support for Salvadoran families. She also thanked the families who attended meetings and emailed the Committee about proposed changes to school start times and encouraged school communities to keep coming together to advocate. She thanked the Superintendent for listening to parents,

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calling it an opportunity for the district to strengthen family engagement. Ms. Jeri Robinson agreed.

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

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT**

*\*As prepared for delivery.*

Happy New Year and welcome to Chairman Loonto. Both the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) and myself look forward to working closely with you to provide youth perspective on pertinent issues within the district to create a better Boston Public Schools. Again, thank you to former Chairman O'Neill for nearly a decade of support for our students.

We also want to welcome Abraham Osorio to the BSAC family, as our new BSAC Coordinator. Maria Ortiz will be moving into a BSAC Manager Role. We are excited to have Abraham on board to provide college and career readiness support to BSAC members and social emotional support and referrals to students that may need it.

Since the last update on December 6th, we had the amazing opportunity to present our major campaigns including the climate curriculum, dismantling the school to prison pipeline work, and the student rights and responsibilities app, to the Mayor's Youth Council and other partner organization.

We are also thrilled to have Alanna Bannister and myself serve as student representatives on the BPS Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline Working Group. We also have two students serving on the exam school/AWC working group and two on the BPS Wellness Council.

We would like to highlight our BSAC student Writer, Kendra, who wrote an amazing article on social emotional wellness in schools and the need for more counselors in our schools. Her article will be featured in the January edition of Teens in Print newspaper, circulated throughout Boston.

Thank you to Ben Vainer, Director of Strategic Initiatives in the Mayor's Education Cabinet, Tommy Welch, Associate Superintendent and Dan Anderson, Executive Director of Strategy for coming to the first BSAC meeting of 2018 to discuss some of the terms of the Build BPS Implementation plan and school reconfiguration. We look forward to continuing the dialogue and seeing student comments and concerns reflected in report.

BSAC held three student town halls last year that were well attended. In preparation for budget season, we seek to engage more students in the conversation. We are planning to host several Student Town Halls this year. We hope to focus on the BPS budget and continue engaging students on the Build BPS and grade reconfiguration process. BSAC will work to engage other student groups in the planning and facilitation of the Town Halls.

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Sixty-one students from 26 high schools currently serve on BSAC, representing 75% of all BPS high schools.

## GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Beverly Hilaire, parent, formerly at the Grew and Ohrenberger schools, testified regarding services for students with dyslexia and requested an out-of-district placement.

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPAC), thanked Mr. O'Neill for his leadership as chair and for his support of students with special needs. She also thanked district leaders for listening to family concerns regarding school start times.

Ana Tavares, principal, Hernandez K-8 School, testified in support of Muñiz Academy's Innovation School proposal.

John Mudd, advocate, thanked Mr. O'Neill for his leaderships as chair.

Cecilia Sariano, advocate, testified in support of Muñiz Academy's Innovation School proposal.

Bob Goodman, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, thanked Mr. O'Neill for his service as chair and testified regarding the challenges of the Mission Hill K-8 School's co-location with Muñiz Academy.

Dan Abramoski, assistant principal, Muñiz Academy, testified in support of school's innovation plan renewal.

## ACTION ITEMS

**Approved** – The Committee approved, by roll call, a Culture and Climate Change in Nicaragua for English Learners grant with an estimated value of \$12,500. Dr. Coleman abstained to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

**Approved** – The Committee approved, by roll call, a McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Emergency Support grant in the amount of \$5,000. Ms. Oliver-Dávila abstained to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

**Approved** – The Committee approved, by roll call, a Title III: English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement Program for English Learners and Immigrant Children and Youth grant in the amount of \$308,360. Ms. Oliver-Dávila abstained to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$529,500.

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**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to France from February 15-24, 2018.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to Italy from February 15-22, 2018.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic from April 10-23, 2018.

## REPORTS

**Margarita Muñiz Innovational Plan Renewal** – Margarita Muñiz Academy Headmaster Dania Vazquez presented for the Committee’s consideration a five-year Innovation Proposal that would continue the school’s current autonomies. Muñiz Academy is the district’s first dual-language high school. The plan discusses the school’s aspiration to expand to grades 7- 12 as part of Build BPS, the district’s 10 year master facilities planning process.

Mr. Loconto clarified that the proposal before the Committee is for the Innovation Plan only, stating that the issue of grade expansion will be considered separately by the Committee as part of Build BPS. The decision to expand would require a separate vote by the Committee.

Mr. O’Neill and Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed concerns about language in the innovation plan proposal that references grade expansion, citing the impact that expansion could have on the Mission Hill K-8 School, which is co-located with Muñiz Academy.

Mr. O’Neill requested that the Committee receive a copy of the innovation plan and asked the district to revise the accompanying equity impact statement to convey that the district will continue to embrace both K-6/7-12 and K-8/9-12 school models.

Committee members also asked questions about the district dual-language pipeline, BSAC representation, and sustainability, all of which were answered by Ms. Vazquez.

The Superintendent suggested new language to include in the equity impact statement. Mr. Loconto said that the Committee looks forward to reviewing the revised equity impact statement and the full innovation plan. He also thanked Ms. Vasquez for her leadership and praised the good work of the school.

The Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposal on January 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Building a Foundation for Success: Boston’s Progress Toward High Quality Universal Pre-K-** Mayor Walsh’s Chief of Education Rahn Dorsey, BPS Early Education Director Jason Sachs and UPS Universal Pre-K Director TeeAra Dias presented

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- The UPK Connector System Pilot presentation is to provide an update on the current Boston Universal Pre-K work. Also, an update on a pilot connector system introduced the school committee in Sept 2017 will be provided.
- The pilot connector is a partnership between two K1 Preschool Expansion Grant programs currently being supported by BPS and two K2 BPS schools.
- The pilot will transition 40 K1 children currently being served in the two community based PEG classrooms into the two K2 pilot school for the fall 2018.

Boston has a mixed delivery system of BPS seats and community-based organization seats.

Boston doesn't have an access problem, it has a quality problem.

Highly educated, well compensated teachers. Share professional development

Ms. Jeri Robinson praised work and asked about pre-k inclusion opportunities.

Ms. Oliver-Davila expressed concerns about the financial impact on community-based organization. 16.5 million in funding would come from state.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mayor and Chief Dorsey for leading the charge on universal pre-k. asked how we are ensuring that BPS will meet our legal requirement to serve students with special needs. Encouraged district staff to work with SpedPAC. Praised pilot. Worried about parents gaming the system to gain BPS seats by entering early.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, asked for a list of quality tiers in the home base student assignment system. She also requested an equity analysis of the home base plan.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **ADJOURN**

At approximately 9:11 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:

*Elizabeth Sullivan*

Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary