



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 11, 2017

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on January 11, 2017 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, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael D. O'Neill; Michael Loconto; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Jeri Robinson; and Regina Robinson.

School Committee Members Absent: Vice Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Keondre McClay.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grant for Approval - Supplementary Support to School Districts with High Concentrations of At-Risk Students: MassGrad Promising Practices (FC 320) - \$40,000

New Mission High School Growth

Data Use in Boston Public Schools (BPS): Performance Meter & School Quality Framework Update

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order. Mr. O'Neill congratulated Victoria Mitchell on her retirement after 22 years as confidential secretary to the School Committee and thanked her for her service.

Mr. O'Neill also extended condolences to Dr. Uriarte on the passing of her mother.

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MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the following meetings: December 7, 2016; December 14, 2016; and January 5, 2017.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening and Happy New Year. I hope everyone had a chance over the holidays to spend some time with their loved ones, get some much-needed rest and relaxation, and to renew yourselves – spiritually, mentally and physically. It's important that we take time to "sharpen our saws," so that our bodies are re-energized and our minds are refreshed and focused.

Last week the School Committee held an organizational meeting at which Michael O'Neill was re-elected to his fifth consecutive term as chairperson and Hardin Coleman was re-elected to his third consecutive one-year term as vice chair. Congratulations to them both.

On behalf of the Boston Public Schools, I would like to express our deep gratitude to Chairperson O'Neill and Dean Coleman, as well as all the School Committee members, for your incredible dedication to our students, families, and staff. Together, we are working to close opportunity and achievement gaps and make students' lives better every day.

Last night, in his farewell address to the nation, President Obama gave us hope while reminding us that we, as citizens, are the true change agents. "I am asking you to believe not in my ability to bring about change, but yours," the President said. He added, "It falls to each of us to be those anxious, jealous guardians of our democracy... To embrace the joyous task we've been given to continually try to improve this great nation of ours."

With the start of a new year, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on some of the accomplishments of the past year that were guided by our values of equity, coherence and innovation, and look ahead at some of the things we aim to achieve this coming year:

- With support from Mayor Martin J. Walsh and additional funding from the City of Boston, BPS will invest \$14 million in the 2017-18 school year to allow more than 15,000 additional students in more than 35 schools to benefit from Extended Learning Time (ELT).
- With this added investment, BPS will have in three years implemented Schedule A ELT in 57 schools serving more than 23,000 students.
- Adding 40 minutes of additional classroom time will allow our teachers, staff, and school leaders more time to address students' needs and challenges, and build on their strengths.
- Currently, these schools are undergoing professional development to prepare for the increased instructional minutes and are devising budget, staffing and schedules to support different approaches to the use of this additional time.

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- We launched a long-term financial planning process and engaged the community in that work.
- We made strategic investments in our current budget that allowed us to continue expanding our nationally recognized early education programming.
- This past school year, we added 216 additional pre-K seats at five schools, including a total of 42 seats at two East Boston Schools.
- The Mario Umana Academy is paving the way by offering the first dual language K1 (pre-K) class in East Boston.
- In the fall, 12 schools rose to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's top Level 1 status, bringing the total number of Level 1 BPS schools to 23. We also now have 25 schools designated as Level 2.
- We launched Excellence for All, an initiative that offers more rigorous instruction and enriched learning opportunities to more fourth graders than previously with Advanced Work Class.
- The Office of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps is leading a speaker series that focuses on pressing issues facing urban education and the sound instruction of students who have been historically marginalized.

These are just a few of the many accomplishments that we are seeing district-wide. This year, we're looking forward to continuing the work outlined in the Strategic Implementation Plan, which ranges from ensuring that we're implementing culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, to professional development, to supporting the continued advancement of disciplinary literacy.

BPS is stronger because of a community of dedicated principals, teachers, and overall leadership — including the members of this School Committee — and I look forward to working together to make our district even stronger, again guided by our shared values of equity, coherence, and innovation.

Last week, I joined the Mayor at the Posse Foundation's Annual Award Ceremony, at which 13 of our students received the prestigious, full-tuition scholarship. The awardees were from a range of schools: the John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science, Boston Latin School, Boston Latin Academy, Another Course to College, Dearborn STEM Academy, Boston Green Academy, Snowden International High School, and Community Academy of Science and Health.

I was also able to give a presentation at a forum hosted by the Boston Foundation. I focused on increasing collaboration across K-12 and post-secondary institutions, bridging opportunity and achievement gaps, long-term funding solutions, and data accountability systems, which you'll hear more about tonight.

Thanks to Mayor Walsh and the City's Workforce Development Office, the tuition-free community college program has expanded. Students who graduate from Boston Public Schools are now eligible to attend Bunker Hill Community College, Roxbury Community College, or

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Mass Bay Community College tuition-free. The City is working to add more colleges in the future, and this is great news for our students.

The Boston Water & Sewer Commission gave a presentation to students at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School on the water system. We appreciate the work of our partnering city agencies to boost education within our classrooms.

This month is “mentoring month,” and we are encouraging the community to learn more about how to get involved with our many partners by signing up to become a mentor. More information can be found at bostonmentors.org.

We also have some great events coming up over the next few days to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Tomorrow night, Boston Latin School will host the district’s 35th annual MLK Celebration. The program features student dance and music ensembles, as well as student-produced videos and winners of the annual history essay contest.

On Monday, when we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Boston Latin School will host an MLK Day of Service Event with nearly 700 volunteers in conjunction with Boston Cares. Mayor Walsh is scheduled to kick off the day. Students will put together robotic and engineering kits, math games and other materials to donate to BPS classrooms. A similar event is being held Monday at City Year to benefit the Higginson-Lewis and Hale schools.

Also on Monday, Boston International Newcomers Academy will host the #IAM MLK Day of Service. Several leaders from the community will be in attendance. The day will include panel discussions and workshops about racism, homophobia, and personal identity, among other topics. I will participate as a panelist on a discussion titled, “Impact and Response to Trauma and Harassment In and Out of Schools.”

I would like to give you an update on the progress we’ve made transitioning the Mattahunt Elementary School into a new full-service early education center that will open next school year, and the critical work underway to successfully reassign all current students to higher performing schools.

The BPS Office of Engagement and Welcome Services have been working closely with school staff over the past two months to provide personalized support to families during the ongoing registration process. This includes providing an on-site registration center at the school.

As of today, BPS staff has:

- Processed 232 students out of the Mattahunt’s 609 students since Dec. 12th, or 38 percent of its student population, in choosing a new school for next year.
- Called 535 families who have provided phone numbers to BPS to schedule appointments for one-on-one consultations to choose a new school.
- Mailed letters to 175 families who are unreachable by phone.

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- Met with the families of 35 percent of the students with disabilities and processed their school choices.
- Sent home multiple backpack letters, translated in Haitian Creole and Spanish, inviting families to come school choice events at the school.

Staff from the Offices of Engagement, Special Education, and English Language Learners will be offering four additional one-on-one consultation sessions to families over the next two weekends in order to provide personal assistance through the transition process. The dates are as follows:

Saturday, January 14th, 9:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Sunday, January 15th, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday, January 21st, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Sunday, January 22nd, 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Other departments have also been working hard to ensure supports are in place for children and families throughout the school year:

- The Academic Response Team is currently working side-by-side with Mattahunt teachers to improve instruction.
- The Office of Data and Accountability is working with grade-level teams and the Instructional Leadership Team to monitor student academic progress and use data to plan instruction.
- The school leadership team is visiting classrooms regularly to ensure teachers are implementing the instructional vision of the school, particularly in the area of guided reading.
- The Office of Social and Emotional Learning is providing professional development to teachers so that they are well prepared to support students on a personalized, as needed basis. The school is focused on instruction and highlighting bright spots in order to support and maintain a positive school culture.
- The Office of Human Capital, in partnership with the Boston Teachers Union, is providing support to Mattahunt teachers to assist them in applying for positions in other BPS schools and obtain certifications in Special Ed or ESL. Teachers with an early education license, including those currently on the Mattahunt faculty, may apply for positions at the new school.
- The Extended Learning Time Office has enrolled 75 students in grades 4 through 5 in the February Acceleration Academy, where they will get intensive, small-group instruction in literacy skills.
- School staff partnered with Caps for Kids to provide 600 students hand-knitted hats during a holiday celebration last month that featured a sing-along by Boston Symphony Youth Orchestra musicians.

Boston Public Schools staff and community members have been actively working on developing a vision of the new “Mattapan Early Elementary School,” as it is temporarily being called. A process to develop a permanent name for the new school will be announced at a later time.

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I have convened several teams to oversee the process of closing the current school and opening the new one. These include a New School Design Team charged with developing a complete proposal for the new school, as well as a Steering Committee, which will serve as advisor to the Design Team.

We know that these kinds of transitions can be difficult and we are working closely with the school community to make sure every family has access to great opportunities for their children. Together, we're launching a new chapter for this site that will put students on a solid path to academic excellence.

I want to personally thank the dedicated Mattahunt teachers and staff who are volunteering their time on the New School Design Team, while also educating the current Mattahunt students.

For more information on our plan, please visit our website at:

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

I would like to provide you with an update on our protocol for training, issuance and use of chemical spray. In our collective bargaining agreements with the BPS superior officers and patrolmen, we agreed to put in place protocols pertaining to training, use and issuance of this chemical spray. There is now a superintendent's circular on this protocol.

Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the district to conduct a satisfaction survey for Mattahunt families. The Superintendent agreed to do so after the transition process is complete. Ms. Robinson also expressed interest in receiving feedback from Mattahunt teachers. She requested that the Committee receive a presentation on the newly designed Mattahunt Early Education Center in the next few months.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed concern that only 38 percent of displaced Mattahunt families have made school selections for next school year. The Superintendent said that it is still early in the school choice process and reaffirmed that the district is providing transition support for impacted families.

Ms. Jeri Robinson encouraged the district to strengthen the supports provided to Level 4 schools to prevent other schools from being designated as Level 4 under review or Level 5.

Mr. O'Neill said that the district needs to do a better job of engaging the communities surrounding Level 4 schools, in addition to engaging the school community.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Boston City Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George testified regarding school start times, residency enforcement and grade configurations.

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Erica Pastor, teacher, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, testified regarding the Excellence for All initiative.

Suzie McGlone, teacher, Orchard Gardens K-8 Schools, testified regarding teacher evaluations and concerns about over-testing.

Ruth Ayuso, student, Fenway High School, and member, Sociedad Latina, testified in favor of expanding dual enrollment opportunities and internship opportunities and providing personalized education plans for every student.

Kristin Johnson, parent, Mendell Elementary School, shared concerns about start-times at Extended Learning Time (ELT) schools.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent a grant for Supplementary Support to School Districts with High Concentrations of At-Risk Students: MassGrad Promising Practices (FC 320) in the amount of \$40,000.

Prior to the Committee's vote on the expansion of New Mission High School, the Superintendent said that he has encouraged New Mission High School, Boston Community Leadership Academy (BCLA) and Another Course to College to think of themselves as a campus and share programs and resources.

Ms. Regina Robinson asked about concerns that were raised by the BCLA community. The Superintendent said that concerns were raised about space, safety and school culture.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked how the district will support BCLA if the school community is not satisfied with New Mission's expansion. The Superintendent said he is committed to collaboration.

Mr. Loconto said his recent tour of the New Mission/BCLA facility increased his comfort with the proposal, which he said will make use of underutilized space and offered high quality, in-demand seats to 7th and 8th graders. He added that the new expanded school could be an exciting 7-12 model for the rest of the district.

Mr. O'Neill expressed support for expanding high quality seats in the Hyde Park area, adding that he still has some concerns about the two schools sharing space. He expressed disappointment that the district did not hold a meeting with impacted parents and asked the district to reach out to those families. Ms. Regina Robinson asked the district to devise a strong parent engagement strategy at the impacted schools and encouraged the district to do more outreach in the future.

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Approved – By roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent’s recommendation to expand New Mission High School to serve grades 7 and 8, starting in the 2017-2018 school year.

REPORTS

Data Use in BPS: Performance Meter and School Quality Framework Update – Nicole Wagner Lam, executive director of the BPS Office of Data and Accountability, and Dr. Lisa Harvey, deputy director of evaluation and programs, Office of Engagement, presented a report on how the district is using data to drive performance. The presenters provided an overview of the BPS Performance Meter and explained how the Superintendent’s cabinet engages in monthly performance dialogues to monitor progress and make necessary changes in the implementation of the strategic plan. They also explained how the performance meter links to the School Quality Framework’s target to close achievement gaps by three points per year.

The presenters were joined by Kristin McSwain of the Boston Opportunity Agenda, who explained how she is helping the district create a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to measure that students are graduating from BPS college and career ready.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the district to focus on equity. She also suggested that the School Quality Working Group should include more representation from community-based organizations.

Ms. Jeri Robinson requested disaggregated data by race, ethnicity and socio-economics to demonstrate more clearly opportunity and achievement gaps. Ms. Wagner Lam invited the Committee to attend the cabinet’s performance dialogues.

Mr. Loconto asked about the timeframe for the work; Ms. Wagner Lam said she expects to finalize the metric by the end of this school year.

Ms. Regina Robinson inquired how the district plans to measure family engagement and best practices. Ms. Swain said a consulting group has been hired to do a literature review of college and career readiness.

Mr. O’Neill emphasized the importance of the district using both the performance meter and a data dashboard, citing the need to track current and past data. He also talked about the pros and cons of setting realistic goals versus aspirational goals.

Ms. Swain invited the Committee to attend the release of the Boston Opportunity Agenda’s Annual Report Card on February 2nd at 9 a.m. at Bank of America.

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PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Mary Battenfeld, member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding the Mattahunt Elementary School closure and the New Mission High School expansion.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 8:20 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn to executive session to discuss collective bargaining strategies related to the Boston Association of School Administrators and Supervisors, Boston Teachers Union, and Administrative Guild, as required by Mass. General Laws, Chapter 69, Section 1J and pursuant to current negotiations with BTU. Mr. O'Neill explained that to have these discussions in an opening meeting could have a detrimental impact on the Committee's bargaining position. The Committee did not return to public session.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary