



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 24, 2018

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on January 24, 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, email 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; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Keondré McClay.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Grants for Approval Totaling \$542,274:

- Leading Educational Access Program (LEAP) - \$5,000
- National Institute of Justice Comprehensive School Safety - \$338,866
- Special Education Program Improvement Grant - \$198,408

Margarita Muñoz Academy Innovational Plan (Updated)

Margarita Muñoz Academy Innovational Plan Equity Impact Statement (Updated)

Boston Public Schools Budget Equity Working Group Update Power Point

Investment Priorities from Budget Equity Working Group Equity Impact Statement

Boston Adult Technical Academy (BATA) Proposal Power Point

Boston Adult Technical Academy (BATA) Proposal Equity Impact Statement

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Memo from Deputy Superintendent of Strategy Donna Muncey to Boston School Committee Re: Boston Adult Technical High School Support for Students Over Age 22

Build BPS Update II Power Point

Build BPS Update II Equity Impact Statement

CALL TO ORDER

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

MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the January 10, 2018 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening everyone. I would like to begin my report tonight by expressing our deepest sympathies to the students, staff and families of the Marshall County High School in Benton, Kentucky, following yesterday’s deadly shooting.

This senseless act of violence, which took the lives of two students and injured 18 others, was allegedly carried out by a 15-year-old student. Think about that: a 15 years old. That is shocking. According to the New York Times reports, Tuesday’s shooting was one of at least 11 shootings on school properties recorded since Jan. 1 *of this year*, and roughly the 50th this school year. What was once a rarity is now becoming frighteningly common.

On Friday I sat alongside state Attorney General Maura Healey and a group of BPS school leaders here in the Bolling Building as we listened to the moving words of Nicole Hockley, co-founder of the Sandy Hook Promise. We gathered to launch a partnership with the Sandy Hook Promise to train BPS educators and students to spot the signs of gun violence and, hopefully, one day, save lives. Nicole told of her emotional journey that began with the loss of her 6-year-old son, Dylan, who was one of 20 children killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. “He’s the start of my why,” she said. “Why Sandy Hook Promise. Why I go around the country talking to school districts. Why we developed these programs. My second why is my surviving son, because I want him to grow up in country that is safe and he doesn’t have the risk of not coming home one day.” She told the story of how Dylan, who like many children with autism, used to flap his arms so energetically she thought he would take off. She asked him why he did that. Dylan, who had delayed speech, surprised her with his answer: “Because I’m a beautiful butterfly.” “Dylan’s wings” she said reminded her of the butterfly effect — the scientific concept that a tiny shift, like an insect fluttering, can influence a significant outcome, like a tornado or

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hurricane on the other side of the world. The students killed in the Newtown shooting are the butterflies powering a movement that could have big ripple effect.

The Sandy Hook Promise, now located in schools from Miami to Los Angeles to Boston, is working to prevent school violence. This is critical work because this saves lives. During the week of February 5 – 9, it will launch ‘Start with Hello’ Week — which aims to create a culture of inclusion and connectedness in our schools, to help combat social isolation. Start with Hello was developed because social isolation — the overwhelming feeling of loneliness from being left out or treated like you are invisible — is a growing epidemic in the United States and within our schools. Excessive feelings of isolation can be associated with violent and suicidal behavior.

Start with Hello teaches students the skills they need to reach out to and include those who may be dealing with chronic social isolation and create a more inclusive climate within their school. Hundreds of schools and youth organizations from across the country are expected to participate in activities and training programs throughout the week, with Sandy Hook Promise’s help and support. To learn more or sign-up go to: www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek.

I would like to take a few minutes to give you some important updates. We are now three weeks into priority registration for grades K0, K1, 6th, 7th and 9th, and as of yesterday, we’ve received 2,253 registrations for next school year. As a reminder for families with students entering those grades, the priority registration period ends Feb. 9th. To reduce your wait time at a Welcome Center, we encourage families to pre-register and make an appointment online at on our website: bostonpublicschools.org/welcomeservices. Some of our schools are still hosting open houses. A list “School Preview Times” is available on the Welcome Services’ webpage, under “EVENTS.” If you are interested in a school that no longer has an open house, please contact that school directly and ask to arrange a visit. For working families unable to make it to one of our welcome centers during regular business hours, all of our Welcome Centers are open 12 to 7 p.m. every Wednesday. Also, this Saturday our Dorchester Welcome Center, located at 1216 Dorchester Avenue, will be open from 9am-1pm for the second weekend in a row.

As some of you may be aware, the board of trustees for the Conservatory Lab Charter School in Dorchester unanimously voted to support exploring conversations with the Boston Public Schools regarding the possibility of the charter school becoming part of the BPS system. It would do so as an in-district Horace Mann charter school. While this is a highly unusual situation, we look forward to discussing this possibility with the School Committee, the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Conservatory Lab’s board to determine whether there is a suitable path forward. If it is ultimately approved, it is believed this would be the first time a Commonwealth charter school would be converted to a district school in Massachusetts. Founded in 1999, the Conservatory Lab opened its doors with a mission to shape lives through a music-rich education.

Now onto some bright spots. Last Thursday I joined Mayor Martin J. Walsh, School Committee Member Alex Oliver-Davila and leaders of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, Boston After School & Beyond to announce a significant expansion of our BoSTEM program. This city-wide initiative is aimed at increasing STEM after-school

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programming for up to 10,000 students in grades 6-8 who are typically underrepresented in STEM learning and careers. United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley was awarded a five-year, \$3.9 million grant from the U. S. Department of Education's *Education, Innovation and Research* program to fuel the expansion of BoSTEM in the Boston Public Schools.

Launched in 2015, BoSTEM is a proven collaboration between schools and community partners dedicated to engaging all grade 6-8 BPS students in STEM learning opportunities to help ensure they succeed in 21st century careers. We held the event at the Mario Umana Academy in East Boston where students, most of whom are immigrants, receive STEM programming from Sociedad Latina, for which you know Committee Member Oliver-Davila serves as executive director. Partnerships with organizations like hers enable us to provide hands-on learning experiences that not only pique the interests of our English Language Learners and Latino students, but also provide them with STEM opportunities that make them feel empowered. It was really cool seeing how the Umana students used wires connected to bananas and tangerines, and as well as people, including the Mayor, to play video games and a keyboard as a way of teaching how an electrical current works.

There is so much incredible learning that takes place in our classrooms every day. Tonight, I want to highlight the powerful instruction that is happening at one of our high schools, the Boston International Newcomers Academy. This fall, BINcA computer teacher Panion Tase challenged the 16 juniors in his web development and programming class to improve their classroom to make it more a collaborative, innovative space.

The students, working in groups, came up with some very compelling designs and created a functioning prototypes. For example, Carolyn DeJesus Martinez built a round workstation with a LCD screen embedded in the table top to use for research to replace their conventional, rectangular desks. Deina DaCosta Lopes developed a concept for a Plexiglas "whiteboard" that used color-coded LED lights to signify class activities.

Both students, incidentally, have launched a Girls Who Code program in their school after taking the class over the summer. Mr. Tase's students produced videos featuring those designs in entering the #MakeItReal Contest sponsored by software maker Autodesk. They beat out nearly 100 other schools and will be splitting a \$25,000 grand prize with another school from Pennsylvania. The BINcA students will be getting Chromebooks, Dremel 3D printers, Full Spectrum Laser Cutters, Oculus Rift Virtual Reality headsets, Arduino kits, to kick start a high-tech makerspace at their school. The contest organizers offered to provide Mr. Tase's class a new computer with a faster processor, which is needed when using the VR headsets. But his students, who learned about computer parts in 9th grade, opted instead to have the parts sourced and to build their own computer, including using their new 3D printer to fabricate the computer's case. Wow. That is quite an amazing experience— learning how to build a computer from scratch. I want to congratulate Mr. Tase and his students, who demonstrated incredible creativity and ingenuity in redesigning their classroom into a 21st-century learning space.

By the way, you might recognize Deina DaCosta Lopes. I talked about this impressive student in one of my reports last month after she received the "We Are Boston Youth Action Award" from

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Mayor Marty Walsh and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement. That concludes my report for tonight.

Committee members offered praise for BINcA. Mr. Loconto thanked the United Way of Massachusetts Bay for providing BoSTEM funding. He expressed excitement about a potential partnership between BPS and the Conservatory Lab Charter.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Boston City Councilor-at-Large Annissa Essaibi-George advocated for active shooter trainings at the school level; asked the Committee to consider the impact that the Muñiz Innovation Plan could have on the Mission Hill K-8 School; and noted that today she introduced City Council hearings on grade configurations, transportation, and the structure of the Boston School Committee.

Falianne Forge, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified in support of partnership funding for the Boston Debate League.

Mary Alice Sandy, teacher, Tobin K-8 School, testified regarding concerns about neighborhood safety and requested changes to the school's hours.

Joel Richards, teacher, Tobin K-8 School, testified regarding concerns about neighborhood safety.

Manuela Viera, parent and member, Tobin School Parent Council and Tobin School Site Council, Tobin K-8 School, testified regarding concerns about neighborhood safety.

John Holly, director of instruction, Tobin K-8 School, testified regarding concerns about neighborhood safety.

Mike Wasserman, executive director, Boston Debate League, testified regarding the impact that proposed changes to BPS partnership funding could have on the Boston Debate League.

Gina Cogan, teacher, Boston Adult Technical Academy, testified in support of the Superintendent's proposal to grant BATA a one-year exception to the age 22 mandatory transfer policy for this academic year.

Jan Phelgar, board member, Muñiz Academy, testified in support of the school's Innovation Plan.

Nora McManus Vincent, parent, Bates Elementary School, and member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding concerns about the Discover BPS website.

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Ron Crawley, city resident, testified regarding budget concerns.

Bob Goodman, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding concerns about the Muñiz Academy Innovation Plan and language about its plans for expansion.

Peggy Wiesenberg, parent of BPS graduates, testified regarding concerns about the Muñiz Academy Innovation Plan and language about its plans for expansion.

Mary Dibinga, teacher, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding the impact that proposed changes to BPS partnership funding could have on the Boston Debate League.

ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Jeri Robinson requested a comprehensive list of professional development opportunities provided by the district. The Superintendent agreed follow up with the information.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved grants totaling \$542,274.

Dr. Dania Vazquez, headmaster of Margarita Muñiz Academy, reviewed updates to the school’s proposed Innovation Plan based on feedback from the School Committee on January 10. The revised plan explicitly states that “Implementation of the proposed expansion to grades 7-12 will be contingent upon finding a facilities solution as part of the BuildBPS process and will require a separate vote by the School Committee.”

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the district to hold conversations between co-located schools in the future.

Mr. O’Neill concurred with Ms. Oliver-Dávila, adding that school communities, not just school leaders, should communicate about issues impacting co-located schools. Expressing concerns about the implications of impact on the Mission Hill K-8 School, Mr. O’Neill suggested adding the following language to the motion to approve the Muniz Innovation Plan: “Implementation of the proposed expansion to grades 7-12 will be contingent upon finding a facilities solution as part of the BuildBPS process and will require a separate vote by the School Committee.”

Dr. Uriarte expressed concern about the Mission Hill K-8 School and Muñiz Academy being pitted against one other, which she attributed to decisions and promises made by past district leaders.

Mr. Loconto said that the current School Committee is committed to addressing concerns related to co-location.

Dr. Vazquez clarified the vote before the Committee, which, if approved, would permit Muñiz Academy to continue planning for 7-12 expansion, and would require a separate vote of the Committee for implementation pending a facilities solution.

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Approved – The Committee approved, by roll call, an amendment to the motion to approve the Margarita Muniz Academy Innovation Plan by adding to the originally proposed motion the following language: “Implementation of the proposed expansion to grades 7-12 will be contingent upon finding a facilities solution as part of the BuildBPS process and will require a separate vote by the School Committee.” Dr. Uriarte abstained. All others voted in favor.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, the Margarita Muñoz Academy Innovation Plan through school year 2023-24.

REPORTS

Budget Equity Workgroup Update – The Budget Equity Working Group a partnership between members of the School Committee’s Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force and the district’s Long Term Financial Planning Advisory Committee. Presenters included Budget Equity Working Group members Ayele Shakur (Regional Executive Director of BUILD and co-chair, Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force), Will Thomas (Charlestown High School Headmaster and member of the Long term financial planning group), Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Colin Rose, Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans, and Managing Director of Long Term Planning Erika Giampietro.

The principles developed by this group have helped to shape the FY19 budget proposal that the Superintendent will present to the Committee on February 7 and have the potential to bring stability to the BPS budget in future years.

The guiding principles are:

- Close deficits through efficiencies
- Make trade-offs and identify new revenue to fund investments
- Make system-wide investments and enable school-led investments, while increasing the impact of existing spending
- All with the goal of closing opportunity and achievement gaps

Ms. Shakur said that the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force will meet on February 27 to consider adding the BPS investment framework as an addendum to the district’s 2016 policy to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps. She invited the public to attend.

Committee members thanked the Budget Equity Group for its work. Ms. Jeri Robinson asked how the investment framework will impact school leaders. Ms. Laurans said that the district needs to galvanize school leaders around the framework. Mr. Thomas talked about need for more funding for all schools. Mr. Loconto called the Governor’s budget proposal disappointing, saying the district needs to identify a sustainable source of funding.

Dr. Uriarte advocated for transparency. She then initiated a conversation about basic funding that all schools need. Ms. Laurans explained that the district seeks a balance between what services are mandated by central office and what services are funded at the discretion of the school leader. Dr. Uriarte also asked about district spending on English Language Learners (ELLs). Ms.

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Laurans said that BPS's spending on ELLs has grown in recent years and is high compared to other districts.

Ms. Regina Robinson requested regular monitoring reports from the Budget Equity Working Group. She also asked if the district would accept evidence of impact from partners such as the Boston Debate League. Ms. Laurans said she would welcome the information.

Mr. Loconto said that the Committee will schedule a presentation by the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force to provide an update on monitoring the district's implementation of the policy.

Mr. O'Neill asked the Budget Equity Working Group to add the City of Boston its list of funding streams to increase. He cautioned that the district needs to consider unintended consequences of changes to BPS partnership funding distribution and asked the budget team to consider providing soft landings for impacted schools.

Dr. Coleman and Mr. Loconto thanked the group for its transparent and honest approach to stabilizing school funding, noting that there is more work to do.

Boston Adult Technical Academy Proposal - Boston Adult Technical Academy (BATA) Headmaster Ben Helfat and Executive Director of Educational Options Freddie Fuentes presented the Superintendent's proposal for a one-year exception to the current BPS policy on age limits for enrollment at BATA, one of the district's alternative schools. The presenters explained that without School Committee approval, BATA students who turn 22 during the academic year would be unable to continue their studies at the schools. A Committee vote is scheduled for February 7. The Superintendent explained that the proposal is a short-term salutation and said that the district is planning a long-term districtwide plan.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila and Ms. Regina Robinson expressed support for proposal.

The Superintendent noted that the Parthenon Group is currently partnering with the district on a study of off-track youth that will be released in the coming months.

Mr. O'Neill asked the Superintendent to include the state requirements for educating overage students in the districtwide proposal.

Build BPS Update Part II – Associate Superintendent Tommy Welch, Director of Strategic Initiatives from the Mayor's Education Cabinet Ben Vainer, and Deputy Chief of Staff for the City's Public Facilities Department Brian McLaughlin presented the second BuildBPS update to the School Committee for the 2017-18 school year.

The report focused on:

- How BuildBPS is connected to the BPS vision of creating a sustainable system,
- Initial proposal vetting,
- Capital repairs, new construction, expansions, and system-wide initiatives,
- The timeline of major events, and

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- And upcoming engagement strategies.

The presenters explained the BuildBPS operating cycle of engage, plan, engage, and invest. The BuildBPS team plans to release an annual report every spring. The team plans to begin engagement on potential changes to grade configurations for middle schools in February.

The district plans to submit accelerated repair project applications to the Massachusetts School Board Authority (MSBA) on behalf of the following schools:

- Rafael Hernandez K-8 School
- Patrick Lyndon K-8 School
- Donald McKay K-8 School
- John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science
- James Otis Elementary School
- Josiah Quincy Elementary School
- Snowden International School at Copley

The submissions are contingent upon approval by the Boston City Council and the School Committee. A School Committee vote on the accelerated repair projects is scheduled for February 7.

Ms. Regina Robinson asked how the district prioritizes accreditation projects and school yard projects, urging the district to be equitable and transparent. She also asked the team to add language to the BuildBPS driving principles about co-location.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the BuildBPS team to partner with community based organizations as it moves into the next phase of engagement.

Dr. Uriarte requested full report on the BuildBPS engagement process, which the presenters agreed to provide.

Ms. Jeri Robinson requested clarity around the timeline for BuildBPS.

Dr. Coleman said that he is not hearing coherent plan or call to action. He cautioned about learning from history and mistakes of the past. He also requested that going forward, all BuildBPS materials list schools with their corresponding tier or level, as well as their opportunity index score. He said that Level 4 schools should be prioritized. He also requested data on how 21st century learning funding is prioritized. The Superintendent agreed to provide the rubric.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Megan Wolf, BPS parent and member, Quality Education for Every Student, advocated for meaningful engagement as part of the BuildBPS process.

NEW BUSINESS

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

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None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10:15 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:

Elizabeth Sullivan

Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary