



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 27, 2016

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on January 27, 2016 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 O’Neill; Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael Loconto; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Savina Tapia.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

School Committee Meeting Minutes: January 13, 2016

International Travel Request: John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science: Cuba, February 12-21, 2016

International Travel Request: Tech Boston Academy: Canada, April 15-17, 2016

Feeder Relationship for Lee Academy and Young Achievers

Code of Student Conduct Update

Update on 100-Day Plan Working Committees

Official Statement from the School Committee’s Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force to the Boston School Committee Regarding the Superintendent’s Proposal to Expand Access to Advanced Work Class

2016 Massachusetts School Building Authority Statements of Interest Accelerated Repair Program

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Memo from Regina Robinson to School Committee Members and Superintendent Tommy Chang, Re: Superintendent's Evaluation Update, dated January 26, 2016

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order.

CITATIONS

The School Committee and Superintendent Chang presented citations to the following teachers who recently earned or renewed their certifications with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards:

- James Heffron, Joyce Kilmer K-8 School
Social Studies-History/Early Adolescence
- Lauren McDade, John D. O'Bryant High School for Mathematics & Science
English Language Arts/ Adolescence and Young Adulthood
- Jessica Pearson, Charlestown High School
Science/Adolescence and Young Adulthood
- Dana Romanczyk, Richard J. Murphy K-8 School
Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the January 13, 2016 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Chang praised Boston Latin School students Kylie Webster-Cazeau and Meggie Noel for launching the B.L.A.C.K. at BLS campaign and starting a courageous dialogue around diversity and cultural competency. [Dr. Chang's full remarks are available on the BPS website.](#)

Ms. Webster-Cazeau and Ms. Noel delivered a powerful message to the School Committee, recalling how after the jury decision not to indict the police officer in the shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, there were a series of Twitter messages that contained "hateful" and "racist" speech. They applauded Mayor Walsh and district leaders for meeting with them this week to listen to their concerns and partnering with them to implement their action plan. School Committee members provided comments supporting the students' effort and echoed the need for more cultural proficiency.

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The Superintendent then continued with his oral report, announcing that the district's graduation rate for the class of 2015 rose four percentage points from the previous year to reach an all-time high of 70.7 percent. Over the past decade, BPS has reduced the graduation-rate gap between white and black students by nearly two-thirds, and cut by half the gap between white and Latino students. Challenges remain, however. The BPS annual dropout rate for students in grades 9 through 12 remained relatively steady in school year 2014-15 at 4.4 percent. The recent creation of a high school office within BPS seeks to not only leverage the district's high school redesign work but also to accelerate efforts to completely close opportunity and achievement gaps.

Last week, the Superintendent joined School Committee members, two dozen BPS principals and hundreds BPS students in Boston's Symphony Hall to listen to Mayor Martin J. Walsh deliver his annual State of the City address. The Mayor re-emphasized his commitment to lifting up the Boston Public Schools so that every child has an opportunity to succeed, and renewed his call to expand early education. Before the speech, the Superintendent stopped to speak to some of the demonstrators who stood outside in the cold advocating for more resources for their students and schools. He listened to their concerns and explained to them the challenging financial situation facing the district this year. BPS schools and Central Office departments are working collaboratively to find efficiencies and search for savings in order to balance the budget. On February 3rd, the Superintendent will present his preliminary Fiscal Year 2017 budget recommendation to the School Committee.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Councilor Tito Jackson testified regarding situation at Boston Latin School.

Elizabeth McIntyre, Greater Boston Legal Services, testified regarding updates to the Code of Conduct.

Kim Janey, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, testified regarding updates to the Code of Conduct and Boston Latin School situation.

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac), testified regarding budget concerns and the Madison Park Technical Vocational High School admissions policy.

John St. Amand, vice-chair, SpedPac, testified regarding SpedPac's third annual resource fair taking place on January 28.

Kristin Johnson, parent, Mendell Elementary School, testified regarding extended learning time and school start and end times.

Kevin Predestin, student, Boston International High School, testified regarding the importance of cultural proficiency.

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Wilmer Quinones, coordinator, Sociedad Latina, testified regarding the importance of cultural proficiency, student involvement in teacher hiring, and the English Language Learner Youth Advisory Task Force.

Katie Grassa, principal, Curley K-8 School, testified in favor of Advanced Work Class (AWC) expansion.

Maura O'Toole, library paraprofessional, Mather Elementary School, testified regarding budget concerns and extended learning time.

Kenny Jervis, co-chair, Citywide Parents Council, testified regarding budget concerns and funding for inclusion.

Mr. O'Neill announced that State Representative Evandro C. Carvalho will help lead a Day on the Hill with the Citywide Parents Council to advocate for more state public education funding. Mr. O'Neill said he plans to testify against the proposed fare increase of student T passes at an MBTA hearing next week.

ACTION ITEM

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science to travel to Cuba from February 12-21, 2016,

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Tech Boston Academy to travel to Canada from April 15-17, 2016.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's recommendation to convert Lee Academy Pilot School to a K-3 school over the course of the next two school years, and maintain its feeder relationship with Young Achievers Science and Math K-8 School, which will remain a K-8.

REPORTS

Update on 100-Day Plan Working Committees – The Superintendent's 100-Day Plan work commenced on the first day of school in September and concludes this month. The 2.5 month transition process included a literature review of major reports written about BPS over the last six years, eight learning sessions for the 35 members of the Transition Team, and more than 40 listen and learn tour events. During that process, the Superintendent and his team met more than 1,500 members of the community and visited nearly 30 schools.

The 100-Day Plan was guided by five key values:

1. All youth can and must achieve at high levels.
2. We innovate and transform teaching and learning to inspire excellence.

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3. Those closest to students must be empowered and held accountable for making the most critical decisions that lead to student achievement.
4. Every child should have access to a high quality school of their choice close to home.
5. We must build a “Culture of We” that is embraced by students, staff, families, and community.

Project leaders for the Superintendent’s 100-Day Plan Working Committees presented the following updates on their work:

Expanded Access of AWC

Presenters: Mary Driscoll, principal leader, and Dr. Karla Estrada, Deputy Superintendent of Student Support Services

Key themes have emerged in the district’s study of Advanced Work Class (AWC). AWC parents value rigor and close-knit community of learners. The current AWC selection system, however, leads to classes that are more segregated by race and class than typical BPS classrooms, which is inconsistent with the district’s mission of expansion of inclusive practices. AWC is a key tool to help close opportunity and achievement gaps and increase diversity in the city’s exam schools.

Immediate actions: Revision of current achievement gap policy through the School Committee’s Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force; professional development; emphasis on universal design for learning; providing a multi-tiered system of support; expanded access to current AWC model; rigor for all; parent outreach; explore assessment criteria; and reinvigorate the exam school initiative.

Ms. Jeri Robinson read a statement on AWC expansion on behalf of the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force, which she co-chairs. The full statement is available at www.bostonpublicschools.org/gaps. The Superintendent said he and his team would reflect on the statement and provide a response in the near future.

Committee praised the Superintendent’s commitment to having high standards for all students.

Mr. Loconto and Dr. Uruiarte asked about other alternatives that were considered but not chosen.

Mr. O’Neill thanked the Superintendent for approaching this work using an equity lens and for working with OAG Task Force.

Mass Core: Current Status and Next Steps

Presenter: Dr. Doannie Tran, Assistant Superintendent for Professional Learning

A committee examining how to expand the Mass Core curriculum has identified potential next steps that include developing a communications strategy for Central Office and schools; Central departments collaborating to design systems to provide consistent guidance around design, approval, and implementation of courses; and having Central Office work collaboratively with schools to ensure rigorous preparation of K-8 by integrating work of AWC expansion, sharing

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capacity between schools, and supporting high schools to build master scheduled allowing for increased Mass Core access.

Committee members asked questions about accountability and access for English Language Learners, all of which were answered by Dr. Tran. Ms. Jeri Robinson said the Mass Core expansion will help BPS students be more prepared for college. Ms. Oliver-Dávila agreed with the Superintendent's belief that the district needs to have standard graduation requirements that are clear to students and families. Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the district to strengthen its partnerships with institutions of higher education. Mr. O'Neill noted that Boston was the first district in the country to take ownership for college completion, citing the Success Boston Initiative.

High School Redesign

Presenter: Turahn Dorsey, Chief of Education

Soon, the High School Redesign committee expects to have a final set of redesign principles that are validated by educators, students, parents, and key stakeholders; an initial set of proposed redesign initiatives to be used as part of the Madison Park turnaround plan; and shared experiences and capacity built among educators at BPS high schools, leading to deeper engagement in High School Redesign.

Kevin McCaskill, executive director, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, stated that district and school leaders are collaborating on the school's Turnaround plan. A February 5th presentation to the school's stakeholder group is planned. Mr. McCaskill cited small learning communities, flexible scheduling and project-based learning as key strategies in Madison's plan for success moving forward.

Mr. O'Neill cited the value of two documentaries: *Most Likely to Succeed* and *Beyond Measure*.

Schedule A Expanded Learning Time

Presenter: Project Manager Shandra Goldfinger and Deputy Superintendent of Strategy Dr. Donna Muncey

Project leaders from the Expanded Learning Time (ELT) committee explained the delay behind the implementation of ELT in schools in Cohort 2. In the past five months, challenges have been identified from BPS' early ELT work – particularly around concerns that parents and staff have raised about start and end time options for elementary students, and the impact of ELT on transportation costs. Before moving forward with the second cohort, BPS needs to address the ongoing concerns and continue to study Cohort 1, while additionally learning from national research.

Committee members asked questions about transportation costs, school start times and the impact of ELT on students and families, all of which were answered by the presenters.

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Central Office Redesign

Presenters: Senior Deputy Superintendent Barbara Deane-Williams and Principal Leader Alexandra Montes McNeil.

The Central Office Redesign committee reported that principals in May 2015 spent 47 percent of their time on instructional activities, and said the goal is to spend 85 percent on instructional activities. Chief among the Redesign committee's next steps and goals is building coordinated systems, structures, and processes to strengthen the teaching and learning team model, principal leaders, administrators of operations, and Instructional Leadership Teams.

Committee members expressed concern about the impact of budget cuts to central office and encouraged the committee to build trust by improving communication. Mr. O'Neill shared anecdotally that he has heard from school leaders that the move of central office from Court Street to the Bolling Building in Dudley Square has been beneficial.

BPS Performance Meter

Presenters: Executive Director of Data and Accountability Nicole Wagner Lam and Kristin McSwain, executive director, Boston Opportunity Agenda.

The charge of the Performance Meter committee is to support a strong performance management culture that is based on a regular review of key metrics associated with school improvement. A major focus of the work going forward is building a shared definition of what performance management looks like across shared groups, and placing a laser-like focus on critical benchmarks and junctures in a student's K-12 trajectory. Among the 11 recommended key performance indicators are: kindergarteners meeting early literacy benchmarks; 10th graders on track for graduation; high schoolers graduating college and career ready; students demonstrating growth in social emotional skills; and students having access to effective and diverse teachers. Create a performance meter that is available to parents, students and the community.

Committee members requested additional information about the committee's thinking behind choosing the indicators and suggested adding a performance indicator for family engagement. Ms. Jeri Robinson encouraged the committee to look more closely at first and second grade benchmarks, before major achievement gaps are established. Dr. Coleman emphasized the importance of numeracy and said the district must find a way to measure the impact of a diverse and culturally proficient teaching staff.

Long-term Financial Plan

Presenters: Erika Giampietro, special assistant to the Superintendent, and Eleanor Laurans, executive director of school finance.

The Long-term Financial Plan committee is focusing on the following key issues: classroom utilization, pay structure and collective bargaining, transportation costs, Special education costs, and external opportunities. Two studies, one by McKinsey and Company and one by Educational Resource Strategies, identified opportunities in the following areas: BPS footprint (number of schools, classrooms, and programs relative to student demand); special education identification,

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service model, and staffing; transportation costs due to school choice policy and cost structure; collective bargaining contracts; and the number of school-based non-teaching staff per student due in part to having a large number of small schools. Dr. Chang expressed that his vision is not school closures but consolidating grade levels between schools and updating feeder patterns.

Dr. Coleman suggested that the goal of rigor for all could reduce transportation costs because all schools would be of high quality. Ms. Jeri Robinson observed that the district's commitment to providing choice comes with a large cost. Ms. Regina Robinson suggested that the Long-term Financial Plan committee making a connection with BPS parent groups. Mr. O'Neill added that last year, parents at the Curley K-8 School produced an impressive video explaining the BPS budget process.

Communications

Presenter: Chief of Staff Dr. Makeeba McCreary

The Communications committee reported having learned and accomplished: improving and updating the district's online presence; establishing a translation/interpretation office; understanding the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and preparing Freedom of Information Act requirements; aggressive community engagement; and improved communication tools. Upcoming projects include an internal communications audit, internal and external communications protocol, brand value exploration, and proactive media interaction.

Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the district to strengthen its communication with external stakeholders. Mr. O'Neill suggested that the BPS communications department establish a robust internship program.

Code of Student Conduct Update – Amalio Nieves, Assistant Superintendent, Social Emotional Learning and Wellness, and Sam Depina, Administrator of Operations explained several proposed changes and its work on the Boston Student Advisory Council Student Rights App, which features students' rights and responsibilities, a guide to suspension and expulsion procedures, and legal aid and advocacy resources. Next steps include professional development, a social emotional learning and wellness conference, BPS Cares initiative, restorative practices, strengthening Tier 1 behavioral supports and resources, data monitoring, and more. The proposed updates are supported by the Code of Conduct Advisory Committee (COCAC).

Committee members asked about possible barriers to implementation, of which were answered by the presenters.

The Committee is scheduled to vote on the Updated Code of Conduct on February 3.

2016 Massachusetts School Building Authority Accelerated Repair Program – Carleton Jones, executive director of capital and facilities management, and Brian McLaughlin, assistant director of Operations with the City's Property & Construction Management Department, presented statements of interest for the Massachusetts School Building Authority's Accelerated Repair Program, which covers work on roofs, windows and boilers. Schools that applied are: West

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Roxbury Educational Complex, Jackson-Mann K-8, McCormack Middle School, Dever Elementary School, Boston Latin School, Channing Elementary School, and Condon Elementary School.

Mr. O'Neill encouraged the district to take a closer look at the Higginson-Lewis K-8 School and Bradley Elementary School, which may be in need of new windows to see if they might qualify.

The Committee is scheduled to vote on the MSBA Statements of Interest on February 3.

Mr. O'Neill announced that, given the late hour, the Committee would postpone the Superintendent's Evaluation Process Update until the February 3 School Committee meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Haris Hardaway, alumnus, Boston Latin School, testified regarding school climate at BLS.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding student participation in personnel hiring and questioned how rigor for all will reduce achievement gaps.

Meghan Wolf, BPS parent and member, Quality Education for Every Student, testified regarding how performance indicators relate to school quality domains.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Regina Robinson thanked the district for making the school registration process a welcoming and positive experience for new families.

ADJOURN

At approximately 11:15 p.m., the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary