



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

October 25, 2017

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on October 25, 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; Vice Chair Hardin Coleman; Michael Loconto; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Jeri Robinson; and Regina Robinson.

School Committee Members Absent: Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Keondré McClay.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grants for Approval Totaling \$1,905,422:

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Sites
\$5,422	2018	GED/HiSET Testing Program	New	Madison Park Adult Education Center
\$1,500,000	2018	Social Emotional Learning In School and Out- of- School Setting Initiative Planning Grant	New	~15 sites districtwide
\$400,000	2018	Strategic Support to Specific Underperforming Schools and Districts – Dever	New	Dever Elementary

International Travel Request - John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science – France and Spain – November 9-26, 2017

Memo from Regina Robinson to Boston School Committee and Superintendent Chang re: Superintendent’s Final Composite Performance Evaluation Rating: School Year 2016-17 dated October 25, 2017

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Superintendent's Composite Summative Performance Evaluation: School Year 2016-17

Building an Office of External Affairs Power Point and Equity Impact Statement

BPS School Year 2016-2017 End of Year Performance Results Power Point and Equity Impact Statement

Update on Strategic Implementation Plan, 2016-2017 Power Point and Equity Impact Statement

CALL TO ORDER

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

MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the October 4, 2017 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening, everyone. It's great to see all of you here this evening. Well, we are smack in the middle of fall. It's truly a beautiful time to live here in New England. And, there are a lot of wonderful events happening in Boston Public Schools that not only celebrate this most picturesque time of year, but increase engagement with our school communities. Let me start with a really exciting event: our BPS Fall Open House. Now, I will turn it over to Dr. Makeeba McCreary, senior advisor and managing director of the Office of External Affairs, to talk about that.

The Open House is this Saturday, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, here at the Bolling Municipal Building. We are located at 2300 Washington Street in Dudley Square, Roxbury. I urge all of you to visit our Open House website, at www.bostonpublicschools.org/fallopenhouse. On the website, you can view a complete list of events and activities. We have everything from lessons and workshops on robotics and coding for the younger students; to resume building, financial management, and career exploration with the Boston PIC, for the older students. There will also be public discussions on grade configurations, BuildBPS facilities projects, and our ongoing analysis on school day start- and end-times. Ann Klee, the President of the GE Foundation, will be joining us for our keynote panel discussion, titled, "Building the STEM Workforce of the Future," and I am really excited about that. We will also be collecting food, clothing, and other supplies for families arriving here from Puerto Rico. So please stop by to donate what you can. We hope all of you — everyone here and watching at home — can join us this Saturday.

Fall Festivals

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Sticking to the fall theme, I'd like to praise our many schools that are building a "Culture of We" with their fall festivals. You're looking now at photos from the Mattapan Early Elementary School, where they had their first-ever fall festival this past weekend. We also have photos from the McKay and P.J. Kennedy schools in East Boston, which had festivals as well.

Not only is the face painting, pony riding, and delicious food fun for our youngest students, but the fall festivals are a great way to build a sense of community and increase family engagement.

I'd like to highlight our ongoing work assisting families from Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands who are arriving here in Boston. BPS, along with our city and community partners, have done an amazing job assisting these families. This week, BPS, Sociedad Latina, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA), and South Boston en Acción, opened Pop-Up Centers to provide these families a single location to enroll in school and get connected to crucial resources such as food, clothing, housing, and healthcare.

As of today, we have enrolled 56 new students from Puerto Rico. This number has more than doubled since Friday. The work behind the scenes has been impressive. I would like to publicly thank all of the people involved in this effort, including School Committee member Alex Oliver-Dávila, Sonia Gomez-Banrey and Monica Roberts from our Office of Engagement, and all of the employees at our Welcome Centers, IBA, and South Boston en Accion.

I'd also like to thank organizations that have donated supplies, including Cradles to Crayons, which graciously donated 750 backpacks full of school supplies, along with another 750 coats, hats, and gloves; and the Belmont Hill School, which has donated clothing and school supplies. It's so important that we welcome these families in a way that puts them at ease. They are still experiencing trauma after losing their homes and uprooting their lives. This is another way to create a safe, welcoming, and sustaining environment that affirms people's cultural and linguistic identities. Thank you all for helping these families, who have lost so much, feel at home in the Boston Public Schools. I'd like to again remind people that if you would like to donate food or clothing, please visit the BPS Fall Open House this Saturday at the Bolling Building.

Our valued partner, EdVestors, is once again celebrating the work of our hardworking school leaders, teachers, and, most importantly, our students, with the 12th annual Thomas Payzant School on the Move Prize on Wednesday, November 1st. The winner will receive a \$100,000 award, and the two runner-ups will receive a \$10,000 award. The three finalists this year are the Mildred Avenue K-8 School in Mattapan, the Donald McKay K-8 School in East Boston, and the Patrick J. Kennedy Elementary School in East Boston. These schools are being recognized for their amazing work in achieving rapid improvement. Congratulations in advance to those school leaders who are being recognized: Mildred Avenue Principal Andrew Rollins, P.J. Kennedy Principal Kristen Goncalves (as well as former PJK Principal Walter Henderson), and McKay Principal Jordan Weymer. Our thanks to EdVestors President and CEO Laura Perille, members of the board, and all of those who come together to make such a significant contribution to better the lives of our students. We are all excited for the award ceremony on Wednesday, November 1.

BPS is in the middle of STEM Week. For the second year in a row, 6,000 students in grades 6-8 are participating in innovative, hands-on science and engineering projects. We are looking at

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some photos from the Hurley School, where students in lab coats are looking at DNA cells and even dissecting a sheep's brain. Students in 30 schools are doing everything from learning how to build interactive robots to designing video games with custom graphics and music. At the Lyndon School, students are coding using Scratch. I'd like to thank i2 Learning for partnering with BPS, and making us the first urban district in the nation to launch STEM Week. STEM occupations are growing at nearly twice the rate of other occupations. A STEM education can help close racial and gender gaps found in math and science fields. I would like to thank our various sponsors, including MathWorks and Vertex.

Last, but not least, I'd like to congratulate our esteemed School Committee Chairperson, Michael O'Neill, for being honored last week by the Council of Great City Schools as a finalist for the 2017 Green-Garner Award, which recognizes outstanding leadership among urban superintendents and board members. Chairperson O'Neill was one of 11 finalists vying for the nation's top award in urban education. Michael's immense knowledge of the city and loyalty to this district is incredibly deep, and his tenacity for advocacy on behalf of students is unsurpassed. I'd like to publicly congratulate him for this wonderful recognition.

I would like to provide a brief update on how we are utilizing the 21st Century Fund through BuildBPS. Mayor Walsh established this \$13 million fund to make immediate, tangible investments in every BPS building. We are using this funding for flexible furniture that fosters innovative and personalized learning in all of our schools. Currently, all schools have submitted their requests, and more than 50,000 items have been selected. Here is a photo showing some examples of the furniture that is ordered for our schools. The BuildBPS management team is working to finalize the quantities of the orders, and preparing bid documents to get the ball rolling.

Mr. O'Neill said he was honored to be nominated for the 2017 Green-Garner Award and to be named a finalist. He congratulated recipient Felton Williams, school board member, Long Beach Unified School District. He also spoke about the CGCS annual fall conference as an opportunity to for large urban school districts to share and learn best practices. He noted that BPS is highly regarded nationally, particularly in the areas of social-emotional learning and health and wellness.

Ms. Regina Robinson praised the district's STEM work.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked the Superintendent for leading the district's support for students arriving in BPS from Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Grisilda Bakiasi, BPS alumna, requested that STEM programs at Brighton High School be reinstated, along with Ms. Elly-May O'Toole, the teacher who developed them.

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Stephen Cremer, regional director, FIRST Robotics program, testified against the elimination of the grant-funded FIRST Robotics program at Brighton High School and stated that this elimination and most other eliminations of robotics programs at BPS schools were the direct result of the policies and actions of BPS.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the Superintendent's school year 2016-17 performance evaluation.

Rodolfo Aguilar, advocate, Massachusetts Parents United, testified regarding MCAS.

ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked questions about how the district selected which schools will benefit from the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) grant from the Wallace Foundation, emphasizing the importance of equity in decision-making at all levels.

Dr. Coleman asked the district's SEL office to add metrics for outcomes tied to specific goals, add a logic model for academic outcomes, and provide data showing the percentage of schools that are Levels 3 and 4.

Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the SEL team to add a SMART goal related to student success outcomes.

Mr. O'Neill noted that Boston is among only six of 130 districts selected to receive this funding. He requested that the Superintendent provide the Committee with a full report detailing the outcomes of this grant funding one year from now.

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 France and Spain from November 9-26, 2017.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$1,905,422.

The Committee next discussed the Superintendent's SY 2016-17 performance evaluation process. Dr. Coleman suggested that next evaluation cycle focus more on SMART goals and less on process issues. He suggested that the Committee and Superintendent work together to set specific goals earlier in the process, and include both leading and lagging indicators.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested making the Superintendent's artifacts of evidence available digitally, adding that August can be a challenging time to conduct the review.

Ms. Regina Robinson suggested that the Committee schedule a mid-year check-in with the Superintendent this winter that includes artifacts.

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Mr. O'Neill suggested that going forward, the Committee and Superintendent should agree upon 4 to 6 performance goals. He noted that, if approved, the Superintendent's final overall performance rating of proficient makes him eligible for a two percent wage increase, in accordance with his contract.

Approved – By roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's composite summative performance evaluation rating for School Year 2016-2017, providing him with an overall rating of proficient.

REPORTS

Building an Office of External Affairs – Dr. Makeeba McCreary, managing director and senior advisor, Office of External Affairs, discussed the growth of the new BPS Office of External Affairs (OEA) under her leadership. With a focus on closing opportunity and achievement gaps, OEA is beginning to engage the local business and philanthropic communities to provide support for innovative programming in an equitable manner. Its work includes engagement campaigns, corporate and foundation management, data management, special initiatives, technical assistance, accountability, and capacity building. OEA has also created a Street Team comprised of BPS students to expand opportunities and gather feedback on the student experience.

Committee members lauded OEA's work, citing the need for coherence and capacity building, and praising the incorporation of student voice. Mr. O'Neill thanked Dr. McCreary for her thorough and thoughtful approach, saying the office fills a critical need for the district. He expressed support for the BPS alumni campaign, which will kick off in the near future. He also encouraged Dr. McCreary to reach out to the many untapped businesses and foundations in Boston. Finally, he encouraged her to think about sustainability as new opportunities develop.

BPS School Year 2016-2017 End of Year Performance Results – Director of Accountability Nicole Wagner Lam presented the results of the Next Generation MCAS for students in grades 3-8, as well as the legacy MCAS in grade 10.

Efforts to develop more rigorous teaching practices within BPS have helped raise the number of 10th-grade students scoring proficient or advanced in MCAS mathematics tests to an all-time high. The 2017 MCAS results show that the proportion of BPS 10th-graders scoring proficient or advanced in math climbed to 67 percent, an increase of one percentage point above the previous year and eight percentage points since 2009.

The district also saw gains in the scores of several student subgroups. The proportion of Black students achieving proficient or advanced in 10th-grade math rose by 3 points, from 58 percent in 2016 to 61 percent this year. Meanwhile, the number of students with disabilities who scored proficient or advanced increased by 2 percentage points, from 27 percent in 2016 to 29 percent in 2017, as did the rate for economically disadvantaged students, which rose from 59 percent in 2016 to 61 percent in 2017.

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The following schools demonstrated improvement in certain key assessment areas, including Student Growth Percentile (SGP), which measures individual student growth from one year to the next, and the Composite Performance Index (CPI), which measures how students are distributed amongst the MCAS performance levels: Nathan Hale Elementary School; Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers; Jeremiah E. Burke High School; and Charlestown High School.

The district is committed to closing persistent achievement gaps that are often the product of ongoing opportunity gaps in the resources and support students receive. BPS is committed to identifying and closing these opportunity gaps. This year, for example, BPS will pilot new high school Mathematics curriculum options for stronger, integrated, standards-aligned pathways that several schools are testing.

While high school students statewide last spring were given the original or what is now referred to as the “Legacy MCAS,” students in grades 3 through 8 took, for the first time, a new assessment called “Next Generation MCAS.” High schools across the state will shift to the new version beginning in 2019. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) developed the updated assessment in an effort to give school districts a much clearer indication of student’s readiness for moving on to the next grade level, as well as college and career.

Since this is the first year of the new assessment, DESE is not providing 2017 accountability levels for schools that administered the new test last spring and met the required participation rates. This means that the majority of BPS schools serving grades 3-8 will not receive an accountability level this year. Additionally, DESE has decided this year not to place any additional schools throughout the state into Level 4 “Turnaround” or Level 5 designations.

For many schools across the state, the results of the new 2017 MCAS assessment may produce what appear to be lower scores. However, DESE has emphasized that that new test has a different scoring scale and is not meant to be compared to the “Legacy MCAS.” Instead, the state will use the 2017 Next Generation MCAS assessment results as a new baseline for target-setting in future years.

With the new assessment, the second-highest performance level, “Meeting Expectations,” is defined as: “A student who performed at this level met grade-level expectations and is academically on track to succeed in the current grade at this subject.”

BPS has posted school-level results from the 2017 spring MCAS at www.bostonpublicschools.org/reports. The state education department is generating “Parent Reports” with individual student results that BPS will distribute in the coming weeks. To learn more about the Next Generation MCAS, families can visit the state’s website www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents.

Committee members expressed concerns about persistent achievement gaps facing BPS students. They asked questions about lessons learned, alternative assessments, the digital divide, and

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strategies for closing opportunity and achievement gaps, all of which were answered by district leaders. The Superintendent said that his team will closely examine schools that demonstrated strong student growth and look for areas for replication. Mr. O’Neill foreshadowed a report that will soon be released that demonstrate that BPS is performing strongly compared with other districts.

Update on Strategic Implementation Plan, 2016-2017 – Superintendent Chang presented an update year one of his Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) and the progression of major initiatives contained within the plan, all of which are working toward closing opportunity and achievement gaps, and are designed to channel the School Committee’s Strategic Vision for BPS.

The Superintendent explained that the 29 initiatives in the SIP proved to be too many, making it difficult for staff to work cross-functionally and make a real impact. The Superintendent and his senior team spent last summer reformulating the SIP to become a work plan, identifying the following six key initiatives of focus: instructional coherence; the prioritization of adult learning; district reconfiguration; more equitable allocation of funds; support for the lowest performing schools; and improved customer experience.

Committee members expressed support for the parred-down, more focused priorities outlined in the SIP, adding that they look forward to seeing evidence of progress in these areas. Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested adding language about the importance of partnerships and the community as a whole. Mr. O’Neill suggested adding the word communication, adding that simple language is sometimes best. He noted that reconfiguration is just one piece of the BuildBPS facilities master plan conversation. He reaffirmed the district’s theory of action that schools serve as the agents of change.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the MCAS results and the Strategic Implementation Plan Update.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Regina Robinson thanked BPS staff and families who participated in several community-building events in recent weeks.

ADJOURN

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

Attest:

Elizabeth Sullivan

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

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Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary