



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 14, 2016

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on December 14, 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 D. O'Neill; Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael Loconto; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and student representative Keondre McClay.

School Committee Member Absent: Dr. Miren Uriarte.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grants for approval totaling \$656,000

- 2017 High School Graduation Rates and Postsecondary Readiness among First Language is not English (FLNE) Students (Fund Code 695) - \$6,000
- Social Emotional Learning In School and Out-of- School Setting Initiative Planning Grant - \$200,000
- Strategic Support for Level 3 Schools -\$450,000

Innovation School Proposals:

1. Eliot K-8 School - Renewal
2. Jeremiah E. Burke High School - Proposal
3. Oliver Wendell Holmes Elementary School – Conversion

FY18 Preview

Achieving Equity, Coherence and Innovation: Instructional Vision and Support in Boston Public Schools Update

New Mission High School Growth

CALL TO ORDER

December 14, 2016

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 following executive sessions:

- October 16, 2013
- July 16, 2014
- July 15, 2015
- February 24, 2016
- April 27, 2016
- July 20, 2016

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**Prepared for delivery.*

Thank you all for being here this evening. Tonight marks our last School Committee meeting of 2016. As we embark upon celebrating the New Year, I would like to wish all of our families, students, staff, and fellow School Committee members a happy and safe holiday season. I thank you all for your hard work and dedication this school year.

I also want to remind everyone — especially our students — to be prepared for some bitterly cold weather that is forecast for tomorrow and Friday; with wind chills expected to be below zero on Friday morning. Everyone, please make sure you bundle up! Wearing gloves, mittens, winter hats, scarves, and warm winter jackets are a must! The National Weather Service suggests wearing multiple layers of clothing; along with garments that are tightly-woven, water repellent, and hooded. Please, please remember to wear a winter hat. 40% of your body heat can be lost from your head. Mittens, snug at the wrist, are better than gloves, and cover your mouth to protect your lungs from the extreme cold. It is possible for frostbite to set in in less than 30 minutes in these types of conditions. It is up to all of us to remain vigilant and remind our youngest students to stay safe outdoors. We are sharing tips on how to stay safe in the cold weather on our social media channels; and we will be providing these tips to our school leaders to share with families.

I would like to praise the students who have been putting on some really impressive musical performances here in the lobby of the Bolling Municipal Building as we celebrate the holiday season. On December 2nd, we had the Philbrick Elementary School Chorus and the Boston Latin School Gospel Choir perform; and on December 9th we had Charlestown High School's Select Choir and the Mario Umana Academy Dance Team help get us in the holiday spirit.

I urge all of you to come down to our lobby once again this Friday, December 16th, from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., to watch some very special performances by the West Zone Early Center Melody Makers, the Chittick School All-Star Choir, and the Henderson Inclusion Upper School

December 14, 2016

Chorus. These students are shining examples for why the arts are so important in our schools. I thank all the arts teachers and partners who put this all together.

A big congratulations to the Haley K-8 Pilot School in Roslindale for winning a nationwide contest from Playworks. Yesterday, Playworks hosted “Rock Star Recess” for all of the students, which included a live performance from the Disney band, “Forever in Your Mind.” This was because the school beat more than 3,000 schools in a contest to receive two free years of services, which is valued at about \$50,000. For those of you who don’t know, Playworks is a partner in 25 BPS schools. They provide recess coaching; and help schools facilitate inclusive, safe, and healthy play — boosting students’ social-emotional skills. By increasing daily physical activity, Playworks helps us foster more empathetic students, which helps them to become more engaged and productive citizens. Thank you, Playworks, for all that you do with our students; and for hosting this really fun event for our students at the Haley.

Nearly 500 Boston Public Schools students visited the Museum of Science today in conjunction with Global Scholars. As part of the Digital Cities Connect! Curriculum, students viewed exhibits on historic inventions, innovative engineers, and design challenges to learn about the engineering design process, and how it is used to create innovative products. They also viewed an exhibit on how engineering solutions are being used locally to manage and protect the water quality of the Charles River.

Congratulations to four of our high school football teams for receiving \$2,000 each from DICK’s Sporting Goods to fund practice equipment. Players from New Mission, the Burke, Brighton, and Charlestown high schools traveled to Gillette Stadium in Foxboro to receive the donations from Patriots Hall of Famer Andre Tippett and former Raiders/Bucs head coach-turned Monday Night Football analyst Jon Gruden. This got a nice write-up in the Boston Globe on Sunday and the event was highlighted during the Monday Night Football game telecast.

I don’t believe he is here with us tonight, but I’d like to just briefly recognize Ted Curley, the varsity baseball coach at the O’Bryant School of Math and Science, who we just learned will be inducted into the Massachusetts Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame on January 28th. Coach Curley joins O’Bryant Volleyball Coach Gertrude Fisher as a Hall-of-Famer. She was named to the Mass. Volleyball and Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 2014. Coach Curley has been with the O’Bryant since 2003, and coached at Milton High School from 1987 to 2012. Congratulations to him on this accomplishment.

For those of you who were not here at last week’s meeting, I announced an early update on next school year’s budget with two pieces of good news: That we are offering Extended Learning Time in 39 schools; and that last week we released school budgets with no changes to our weighted student funding formula. We are very excited about this news; and we feel that this exemplifies that our long-term financial planning is paying off. Extended Learning Time will add 40 minutes to the school day; and is being made possible through a \$14 million investment in a critical initiative to close opportunity and achievement gaps. With this added investment, BPS will have implemented Extended Learning Time in 57 schools serving more than 23,000 students in only three years. During tonight’s meeting, we will receive a presentation from Chief

December 14, 2016

Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans that will provide an overview and some more detail on what is to come during our Fiscal Year 2018 budgeting process.

I would like to briefly update you on where we are with the process of helping transition families of students at the Mattahunt School. We are committed to working with each family at the Mattahunt in navigating the school choice/transfer process for the 2017 school year via information sessions and personalized support. In total, 81 students have selected new schools as of today. We held an information session on Monday for families. (Eighteen families attended two sessions on Monday.) Our next information session will take place at the Dorchester Welcome Center on Monday, December 19 from 8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m. and Tuesday, December 20 at the Roslindale Welcome Center from 8:30 a.m. -10 a.m. We also provided school buses to allow families to tour new schools; and 32 families have taken advantage of that. I am pleased that the Engagement Office has set up a transition office at the Mattahunt and has been working tirelessly to meet one-on-one with families to assist them with the registration process. Bilingual members of our central staff are also assisting in reaching out to families who speak languages other than English to let families know they can come in for assistance. We look forward to helping our families through this transition process so our students are better prepared to succeed moving forward.

Speaking of parent engagement, members from the Citywide Parents Council (CPC), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac), and other parent groups spoke with members of our leadership team this week. I look forward to collaborating together as we go out to our communities to speak about several issues, including our long-term financial planning and Facilities Master Plan (FMP) processes.

Mr. O'Neill clarified that the School Committee's vote on the Mattahunt School includes the following provisions: every family will receive a one-on-one meeting with transition counselors; every student will have options; and every student will be guaranteed placement at level 1, level 2, or level 3 schools.

Mr. O'Neill asked the Superintendent to keep Mattahunt families informed about the transition process as well as planning for the new early education center that will open at the site in September 2017.

The Superintendent agreed to come back to the Committee in January with an analysis of lessons learned about the Mattahunt, as well as how students from other closed schools are performing academically, and steps that receiving schools are taking to be sensitive to the experiences of displaced students.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila requested that protocols be put in place to inform families and the School Committee about level 3 and level 4 schools. She also requested an update on Boston Latin School.

Ms. Jeri Robinson said the district needs to communicate better so as not to repeat past mistakes and expressed hope that the Mattahunt Level 4 school closure will be the last such situation of its

December 14, 2016

kind. She also said the Committee needs to better understand the relationship between grade configurations and feeder schools/pathways, and needs to see more research around the value of middle schools.

Dean Coleman thanked the Superintendent for delaying the vote on grade configurations saying the Committee needs more information before it can take action.

Mr. O'Neill said that the issue of grade configurations is an important theoretical discussion. He encouraged the district to solicit more feedback from stakeholders, including students.

Ms. Regina Robinson said that she served as Big Cheese Reader at the Timilty Middle School earlier today and was impressed with the students. She asked the district to conduct a family satisfaction survey for displaced Mattahunt students. She also said that BPS needs to have a seat at the table with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to improve communication.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson testified regarding the Mattahunt Elementary School closure. He also advocated for funding for the Roland Hayes School of Music, as well as free M7 passes for all BPS high school students.

Gleyris Codero Soto, Lorraine Sanchez, and Pedro Almanzar, students, Hernandez K-8 School, testified about a school yard renovation project.

Kevin Predestin, student, BINCA, testified in favor of student-centered learning.

Alex Butler, parent, Edison K-8 School, testified regarding concerns about student safety on school buses.

Melissa Partridge, chief of staff, Mass Insight, testified in favor of the grade expansion proposal for New Mission High School.

Elica Hector-Varrs, parent, Mattahunt Elementary School, testified regarding the closure of Mattahunt and the transition of displaced students.

Erica Pastor, teacher, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, testified regarding standardized testing and reading cultures.

Gina Nota, Julie Fouhy, and Jen Garay, teachers, Excel High School, testified regarding Excel's turnaround plans, the work of the Local Stakeholder Group and the timeline moving forward. Peggy Wiesenberg, Access to Justice Fellow, testified regarding the closure of the Mattahunt.

December 14, 2016

Grace Richardson, parent, Mattahunt Elementary School, testified regarding the closure of the Mattahunt.

Aveann Bridgemohan, parent, Mattahunt Elementary School, testified regarding the closure of the Mattahunt.

ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Oliver-Dávila requested more information about the grant for Social Emotional Learning grant and out of school planning. The Superintendent agreed to follow up.

Ms. Jeri Robinson asked about the curriculum for the Level 3 grant. Director of Turnaround Liza Veto explained that each grant is targeted to the school's instructional focus. Ms. Regina Robinson requested a breakdown of grant funding.

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$656,000.

Mr. Loconto asked about the open posting process at the Holmes Elementary School, which Principal Yeshi Gaskin Lamour explained in greater detail.

Dean Coleman asked about Burke High School's proposal to expand competency-based learning and trauma sensitive support for students, saying that the school's population may change if it grows in popularity and fewer students are administratively assigned. The Superintendent said that the district will have to monitor the school's population as the quality improves.

BPS Legal Counsel Alissa Ocasio clarified that Committee members who served on an individual school's innovation committee do not need to recuse themselves from voting on that school's innovation proposal.

Approved – By roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the renewal of the innovation plan of the Eliot K-8 Innovation School.

Approved – By roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the innovation proposal for the Jeremiah E. Burke High School.

Approved – By roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the innovation proposal for the Oliver Wendell Holmes Elementary School.

REPORTS

Fiscal Year 18 Preview – Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans and Budget Director David Bloom provided an overview of FY18 planning. Ms. Laurans outlined how district leaders plan to focus on two critical priorities for next year: extending the school day at more schools and maintaining the current Weighted Student Funding formulas. Ms. Laurans cautioned that

December 14, 2016

although the Superintendent has made no changes to the weighted student funding formula, some schools could still see changes to their school budgets based on their enrollment projections. The Superintendent will present his preliminary FY18 budget recommendation to the Committee on February 1. A series of FY18 budget hearings scheduled are scheduled for February and March. Online feedback is also welcome. For additional information, please visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/budget.

Mr. O'Neill thanked district leaders for engaging stakeholders so early in the budget planning process.

Mr. McClay thanked Ms. Laurans for engaging students and requested additional meetings to engage students in greater depth.

Ms. Jeri Robinson asked about the possibility of any major budget cuts. Ms. Laurans said responded that decisions still need to be made on central office portion of budget. The Superintendent agreed to follow up with information about lessons learned from first cohort of ELT schools.

Dean Coleman said that BPS leaders must find new ways to grow the financial resources coming into the district. The Superintendent explained that approximately 9 -10 percent of BPS funding comes from federal government, noting it is not likely to increase. The City of Boston continues to pick up more of the burden. The Superintendent said that the district needs to be more creative to increase private funding.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed concern about maintaining adequate funding for central office, saying it provides needed supports to schools. Mr. O'Neill agreed that it's a delicate balance.

Achieving Equity, Coherence and Innovation: Instructional Vision and Support in the Boston Public Schools – Deputy Superintendent Karla Estrada and Chief of Schools Michele Shannon presented an update on instructional activities and structures that have been developed to support the achievement of the instructional vision and strategic implementation plan (SIP) initiatives. These structures include the joining of academics and student support services offices to form the Academic and Student Supports for Equity Team (ASSET), as well as the Teaching and Learning Teams (TLTs) being led by the Instructional Superintendents. A special focus will be placed on student-centered learning to promote college and career readiness and cognitively demanding tasks.

School Committee members expressed great enthusiasm for the presentation. Members asked questions about key performance indicator, cognitively demanding tasks, and barriers to success, all of which were answered by the presenters. Ms. Regina Robinson asked about opportunities for Committee members to see this work in action. The Superintendent encouraged Committee members who want to learn more to attend an instructional focus review session.

New Mission High School Growth – Dr. Naia Wilson, headmaster of New Mission High School, presented the Superintendent's proposal to expand the school from grades 9 through 12

December 14, 2016

to 7 through 12. This proposed grade configuration would help reduce the number of transitions between schools for some students and help provide important rigor around math and other subjects to a greater number of students earlier in their high school careers. Dr. Wilson was joined by NMHS science department chair Nalin Ratnayake.

The Superintendent said there compelling reasons to support the proposed reconfiguration:

- New Mission has done a substantial amount of planning over the past two years to expand their programming through a planning grant from the Boston Schools Fund.
- New Mission, a pilot school, has substantial support from their governing board, teachers, parents and students to expand to a 7-12 school – the first non-exam high school that would be 7-12.
- The entire school system can learn from this process that New Mission will hopefully engage in.
- New Mission can receive a \$150,000 grant if they begin this process in fall 2017.

Ms. Regina Robinson asked about the community’s response to the proposal. Dr. Wilson acknowledged that New Mission should do more outreach with Boston Community Leadership Academy (BCLA), which whom the school is co-located. She added that the goal is to share resources among New Mission, BCLA, and neighboring Another Course to College.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila said sharing space can be challenging for schools.

Mr. Loconto lauded New Mission for reducing opportunity and achievement gaps, saying their track record bodes well for the district.

Dean Coleman encouraged New Mission to share its 7-12 model through cross-collaboration. He asked Dr. Wilson to consider whether it’s necessary for New Mission to require an application, cautioning that it could create an intended barrier for students.

Mr. O’Neill expressed mixed feelings about proposal, saying he likes the idea of expanded middle school seats for students in the Hyde Park area but has concerns about expanding a school that shares space with another. He noted that some BCLA teachers have raised concerns about process, space and safety of 7th and 8th graders in high schools and encouraged a joint meeting of the schools’ staff to promote communication and transparency. Mr. O’Neill encouraged the Superintendent to attend meetings with the impacted school communities. The Superintendent affirmed his commitment to collaboration. Several Committee members expressed interest in touring the New Mission/BCLA facility, an opportunity Dr. Wilson agreed to provide.

December 14, 2016

Peggy Wiesenberg, Access to Justice Fellow, testified regarding the New Mission grade expansion proposal.

Maria Christina Blanco, secretary, parent council, Boston Community Leadership Academy, expressed concern regarding the proposed grade expansion of New Mission High School.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the instructional vision and FY18 budget preview. He requested that a program budget analysis be included in the district's budget presentations to the Committee.


NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10:30 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; as well as collective bargaining strategies related to the Boston School Police Superior Officers Federation and the Boston School Police Patrolmen's Association. 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