



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE RETREAT

February 11, 2017

The Boston School Committee held a professional development training (closed session) on February 11, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, School Committee chamber, second floor, Roxbury, Massachusetts. The training was followed by a retreat (open session) at 10:45 a.m. 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 Dr. Miren Uriarte.

School Committee Member Absent: student representative Keondre McClay.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Training on Governance Best Practices, District Management Group

Developing a Strategic Vision for the Boston Public Schools (BSC 2015)

Strong Schools, Stronger Boston: A Plan to Foster Equity, Coherence, and Innovation – Boston Public Schools Strategic Implementation Plan 2016-2021

Building a Culture of Performance Management in BPS

BPS Performance Meter

2017 Boston School Committee Meeting Calendar

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CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill welcomed Committee members and the Superintendent to the session and thanked them for attending. He then provided a brief overview of the School Committee's 2014-2015 strategic planning process, which served as the foundation for the Superintendent's strategic plan. He reviewed the goals for the day, which included learning best practices of highly effective school boards, discussing the Superintendent's efforts to build a culture of performance management in BPS, and planning the School Committee meeting agendas for 2017.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING - SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION (CLOSED SESSION)

John Kim, chief executive officer, District Management Group, introduced himself as the facilitator of the professional development session. Mr. Kim reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Committee and Superintendent, highlighting the separation of powers between them. He explained that the Committee is responsible for policy development (i.e. the "what"), while the Superintendent is responsible for policy implementation (i.e. the "how").

At the conclusion, Mr. Kim summarized the major themes of the discussion:

- Communication and clarity
- Understanding
- Student engagement and equity
- Process and systems

The group adjourned for a short break.

RETREAT - SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION (OPEN SESSION)

Building a Culture of Performance Management in BPS - At approximately 11:15 a.m., the Committee and Superintendent kicked off the second phase of the retreat in open session. The following members of the Superintendent's executive cabinet joined the discussion: Special Assistant Lydia Ramos; Deputy Superintendent of Strategy Donna Muncey; Chief of Operations John Hanlon; Chief of Staff Makeeba McCreary; BPS Legal Advisor Alissa Ocasio (continued from earlier session); and the Mayor's Chief of Education Rahn Dorsey.

The Superintendent began by reviewing the theory of action from the School Committee's strategic plan. He described the Boston Public Schools (BPS) as a hybrid system of school autonomy and dependence, offering tiered approaches of support and instruction. He added that the district must be nimble and build capacity where needed.

The Superintendent reviewed the latest draft of the BPS Performance Meter, explaining his desire to make data driven decisions. He said that the Performance Meter is not meant to be a balanced score card, but rather annual statement on the health of the district. Mr. O'Neill

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suggested that the Superintendent present the Performance Meter similarly to a heat map, showing results in red, yellow and green.

The group discussed various guardrails of which to be mindful, including federal and state statutes, School Committee policies, collective bargaining, and court mandates. They also discussed the need to measure opportunity gaps separately from achievement gaps.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila requested quarterly updates on Level 3 and Level 4 schools and supports provided by the district. Dr. Muncey said that the American Institute of Research (AIR) conducts annual reports on Level 4 BPS schools and the lowest performing BPS Level 3 schools.

The group discussed the need to balance school autonomy with coherence and accountability while maintaining an equity lens.

Ms. Jeri Robinson expressed a desire to better understand student cohorts and school choice behavior.

Members concluded that the metrics presented in the Performance Meter would benefit from more exploration and discussion.

Dean Coleman suggested having the School Quality Working Group, which he chairs, analyze school-by-school data.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila offered to work with Dr. Muncey on college and career readiness issues.

The Superintendent said it would be helpful for the Committee to provide expertise and assistance in the areas of engagement and data. Members also suggested partnering with local universities.

The group adjourned for a lunch break, then reconvened to discuss Committee meeting agenda setting. Mr. O'Neill said that he, Dean Coleman and the Superintendent collaborate to set the meeting agendas based on suggestions from Committee members. They try to schedule two-to-three reports per meeting.

Mr. Kim asked members to discuss their thought process for prioritizing agenda topics.

Members concluded that agenda items generally fall into the following categories:

- statutory (e.g. budget, superintendent's evaluation)
- policy making/policy review on issues that have a large impact
- task force reporting
- district performance/review/monitoring
- aligned with the priorities of the Committee's strategic plan
- bully pulpit

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Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
School Committee Chamber

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Members expressed a desire to set a long-term agenda. They also discussed ongoing tension regarding who the superintendent should engage first, the Committee or the community.

Dean Coleman recommended the book, *The Four Conversations: Daily Communication that Gets Results* by Jeffrey and Laurie Ford.

The group concluded that the better the flow of information, the more everyone can trust the process. Members agreed to submit agenda topics to Ms. Sullivan within one week.

Members closed the session by sharing their reflections on the day, describing it informing, engaging and affirming.

ADJOURN

At approximately 2:50 p.m., the Committee adjourned the session.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary