



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET HEARING AND MEETING

March 15, 2017

The Boston School Committee held a Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) budget hearing on Wednesday March 15, 2017 at 5 p.m. followed by a Committee meeting 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; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson (arrived while hearing was in session); and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

School Committee Members Absent: Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; and student representative Keondre McClay.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill called the budget hearing to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT AT FY18 BUDGET HEARING

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's FY18 budget recommendation:

- Brett Gormley, teacher, McCormack Middle School
- Peter Myer, retired Boston Public Schools (BPS) teacher
- Adina Shector, teacher, McCormack Middle School
- Jeff Cook, headmaster, Urban Science Academy
- Alanna Bannister, student, West Roxbury Academy and member, Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)
- Joseph Okafor, student, Urban Science Academy
- Jhalen Williams, student, Brighton High School
- Fania Joseph, president, Boston Student Advisory Council
- Annie McAdams, teacher, Urban Science Academy

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- Jack Sinnott, parent, Urban Science Academy
- Robert Jenkins, alumnus, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School
- Johnny McInnis, president, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM)
- Michael Heichman, former BPS parent
- Diana Carson, volunteer, McCormack Middle School
- Elica Hector-Varrs, parent, Brighton High School
- Matt Ruggiero, BPS alumnus, and teacher, Dearborn STEM Academy
- Cynda Pinto, BPS parent
- Miranda Trezise, parent, McCormack Middle School
- Antonelli Mejia, Boston Education Action Network (BEAN)
- Louise Packard, school partner, McCormack Middle School
- Greg Banks, teacher, Urban Science Academy
- Steven Oakland, teacher, Urban Science Academy
- Ivette Rivera, teacher, Urban Science Academy

ADJOURN

Approved – By roll call the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the budget hearing at 6 p.m.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grant for Approval: STARTALK Arabic Summer Academy - \$90,000

International Travel Request: Boston Green Academy – Guatemala – April 6-17, 2017

International Travel Request: Joseph Lee K-8 School – Costa Rica – April 17-25, 2017

International Travel Request: Young Achievers Science and Math K-8 Pilot School – Costa Rica – April 9-17

Build BPS 10-Year Educational and Facilities Master Plan

Memo from Supt to School Committee Re: FY 18 Budget Changes

FY18 Budget Equity Analysis

CALL TO ORDER

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

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MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the February 11, 2017 retreat and the March 1, 2017 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening. Once again, I want to thank all of our dedicated custodians and other employees for getting our schools ready to reopen and our buses ready to run tomorrow. While most of us were staying warm inside during yesterday's snowstorm and today's chilly weather, these folks were outdoors braving the elements so our students can safely return to school tomorrow.

Boston Public Schools is guided by the shared values of equity, coherence and innovation. We are seeing examples of these values in our schools and we continue to support staff in creating new opportunities to serve students and families by closing opportunity and achievement gaps.

When we the district gave a progress update to the School Committee on Level 4 schools last month, some of you requested that we look into holding family meetings at each of our Level 4 schools to engage parents in the work we've been doing to improve the schools and the outcomes for the children.

We are in the planning stages of developing these meetings. The goal is to have conversations with families of students at our 10 Level 4 schools before the end of the school year. These meetings will offer families a chance to learn:

- each school's progress to date;
- what the district is doing to support the school; and
- how families can support both their children and the school.

We are piloting these conversations this spring, with the goal being that these would become a regular occurrence at all Level 4 schools each fall following state accountability designations.

We have already begun having conversations with Brighton and Excel families to discuss the schools' new Level 4 designations this year and to collect input that we will incorporate in plans for each school's future.

Families, some students and staff attended our community meetings we held at the Bolling Building on March 2. In addition, we've led student focus groups at both schools in March to obtain student feedback for the future of the schools.

I want to give a quick update that the processing of Round 1 registrations is on schedule. We plan to notify families next week by postal mail. Students entering K2 will be notified in mid-April, due to new guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary

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Education (DESE) around language testing. Exam school notifications were mailed out to applicants earlier this week, and electronic notifications went out yesterday. As always, we appreciate everyone's interest in our exam schools and we wish all of the applicants the best of luck.

Last week, BPS was honored by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) as a winner of its first-ever "Great Districts for Great Teachers" initiative. BPS was selected after a rigorous 18-month evaluation found that we are among eight districts considered national leaders in developing and caring for great teachers so they in turn can deliver great instruction to our students.

This award not only recognizes the tremendous work the district has done to create a culture that develops and supports our teachers, but, most importantly, it is a tribute to the dedication and passion of our many excellent teachers themselves.

We greatly value our teachers and recognize the tremendous impact they have on improving students' lives. They make a difference, each and every day. We are also committed to building a teaching force that is not only the most talented in the nation, but also celebrates and reflects the rich diversity of our students.

On March 3rd and 4th the BPS Science Department and Northeastern University's Center for STEM Education hosted the 71st Annual Boston Public Schools Citywide/Mass. Region VI Science Fair. The Science Fair each year provides an opportunity for students to "do" science and solve engineering problems. As the students prepare for this exhibition, they not only learn important science and engineering concepts but they also learn how scientists and engineers investigate and make sense of the world. Thousands of students across the city participated in their school level fairs and the "best of the best" were invited to display their exhibits and compete at the BPS Citywide/MA Region VI Science Fair. At this year's Science Fair, we had 228 outstanding exhibits showcasing 336 students — including Austin Consalvo, son of Rob, our new Chief of Staff — representing schools from across the city.

Last Thursday, we honored the 134 students who won awards at a ceremony here at the Bolling Building. Four of these winners, including the top overall project by the East Boston High School team of Cristian Figueroa and Kevin Turcios will receive an all-expenses paid trip to the International Science and Engineering Fair in Los Angeles in May. I want to congratulate all the winners and the rest of our young scientists for making us proud.

I'd like to extend a big thank you to the RSM Boston Foundation for its generous \$110,000 grant to the Warren-Prescott K-8 School. This significant donation will contribute to an overhaul of the lighting system in the auditorium, technology supports for the autism strand and a myriad of academic and enrichment tools identified by the Warren-Prescott school community. RSM and Warren-Prescott have a years-long relationship and are a great example of what a productive InvestBPS partnership can look like. InvestBPS allows companies, like RSM, to match interests with school needs. We are already seeing the powerful results of this collaboration with RSM, whose employees transformed the Warren-Prescott's schoolyard into an inviting new space for kids.

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Ms. Jeri Robinson requested that the Committee receive feedback from the parent conferences at Level 4 schools, which the superintendent agreed to provide. Mr. O'Neill encouraged the district to coordinate with the Citywide Parents Council.

Dr. Uriarte asked about the goals of the parent meetings, which the Superintendent explained are to help families understand DESE levels, school climate, share information from monitoring site visits, as well as how BPS is supporting the needs of schools and how parents can provide support.

Ms. Regina Robinson thanked parents who helped their students with science projects.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's FY18 budget recommendation:

- Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson,
- Jhalen Williams, student, Excel High School
- Fania Joseph, BPS student, and member, BSAC
- John Mudd, advocate
- Ayele Shakur, co-chair, Boston School Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force
- Lucinda Mills, BPS counselor
- Casey Gruppioni, Boston Education Action Networks (BEAN)
- Cheryl Robinson, parent, Clap Innovation School
- Anjali Nirmalan, teacher, UP Academy Boston, and member, BEAN
- Mike Kincade, parent, Urban Science Academy
- Bon Damon, member, Citywide Parents Council
- Linda Freeman, parent, Boston Green Academy
- Malikka Williams, member, Citywide Parent Council
- Leila Parks, teacher, Clap Innovation School
- Kimberly Cook, prospective BPS parent
- Mary Battenfeld, parent, Boston Arts Academy, and member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST)
- Emily Familia, student, Fenway High School

The following people testified regarding the expansion of New Mission High School, which is co-located with Boston Community Leadership Academy:

- Bergeline Hilare, student, Boston Community Leadership Academy, and member, BSAC
- Damian Burgos, student, BCLA
- Theresa Driscoll, parent, BCLA
- Patricia Minniti, teacher, BCLA

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- John Cloherty, chair, BCLA Governing Board
- Michelle Grady, teacher, BCLA, read statement from parent Sandra Jordan
- Jesus Najera, parent, BCLA
- Maria Christina Blanco, parent, BCLA

Latoya Gayle, BPS parent, testified regarding the BPS Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Office

Raquel Martinez, student, Boston Day and Evening Academy, testified in favor of universal free M7 transportation passes.

Mr. O'Neill asked the Superintendent to schedule meetings with the governing boards and parent councils of both Boston Community Leadership Academy and New Mission High School, adding that the Committee thinks highly of both schools.

Dr. Uriate requested a report to the Committee on schools that are co-located. The Superintendent clarified that the first year of New Mission High School's expansion will not physically impact BCLA. Instructional Superintendent Anthony Pope and Chief of Schools Michele Shannon are scheduled to attend a meeting with the BCLA community on March 22. The Superintendent said that the district could have done a better job engaging staff and parents earlier in the process.

ACTION ITEMS

Jeri Robinson requested that the Committee receive a presentation featuring BPS students who have taken part in international travel programs.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent a grant for STARTALK Arabic Summer Academy in the amount of \$90,000.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Green Academy to travel to Guatemala from April 6-17, 2017.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from the Joseph Lee K-8 School to travel to Costa Rica from April 17-25, 2017.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Young Achievers Science and Math K-8 Pilot School to travel to Costa Rica from April 9-17.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved statements of interest for the Massachusetts School Building Authority's Accelerated Repair Program: Chittick Elementary School; East Boston High School; James Curley K-8 School; Joyce Kilmer K-8 School;

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Marshall/UP Academy K-8 School; O'Donnell K-5 School; Oliver Perry K-8 School; Russell K-5 School; Sumner K-5 School; Timilty Middle School; and Tobin K-8 School.

REPORTS

Build BPS 10-Year Educational and Facilities Master Plan – Superintendent Chang began by discussing his Educational Vision, citing the need for flexible learning. Chief of Education Rahn Dorsey, Director of Strategic Initiatives Ben Vainer, Mayor's Adviser Casey Brock-Wilson, and BPS Chief of Operations John Hanlon then provided an overview of the newly released Build BPS report, a first-of-its-kind, living planning document that provides a comprehensive accounting of the district's school-building capacity and school-building conditions. They explained that Build BPS is collection of data, organized in a useable, updateable system, accompanied by a process guide for community engagement and decision making; it is not a list of specific project recommendations or school closures.

The BPS school-age population is expected to grow by 10,000 over the next decade, with students concentrated in the neighborhoods of Dorchester, Roxbury, East Boston and Mattapan and among Latina and African-American. 127 schools were assessed in four core areas: facility assessment; site assessment (i.e. surrounding area); educational facility effectiveness (e.g. acoustics, lighting); and effectiveness of educational space (e.g. gym, cafeteria, etc.) Immediate investments include: 21st Century Schools Fund; prototype projects; repair cycle; and Massachusetts School Building Authority accelerated repair projects.

Build BPS will hold a series of informational sessions to begin a community conversation that will help guide the district in setting priorities for future investments in school facilities.

Mr. Loconto called Build BPS a valuable tool and was pleased to learn that the Dearborn 6-12 STEM Academy building, which is currently under construction, will meet 21st century learning standards. He suggested that Build BPS and district leaders hold tandem community conversations about desired grade configurations. He also asked questions about the expansion of high quality pre-k seats, Build BPS financing and the 21st Century Schools Fund, all of which were answered by the presenters.

Ms. Regina Robinson drew parallels between Build BPS and the budget impact statement presented by Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Co-Chair Ayele Shakur earlier that evening. She encouraged Build BPS to hold webinars for kindergarten teachers.

Dr. Uriarte thanked the presenters for the comprehensive report, which includes revised demographic data. She encouraged the presenters to highlight the connections between community organizations and the neighborhoods they serve, which the presenters agreed to do.

Ms. Jeri Robinson said that adults must always be mindful to put students at the center of decision making

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Dr. Coleman said it is imperative that the district identify a dollar figure that represents the cost of fully funded schools. He expressed concern about growing income gaps in Boston. He suggested that the district should have a theory on the relationship between the desires and needs of neighborhoods vs. those citywide. Dean Coleman also described Build BPS as an opportunity to match populations with buildings, adding that the district's goal remains offering families quality schools options close to home.

Mr. O'Neill called the report incredibly exciting. He cautioned that the projected BPS student population growth may be conservative, noting that Cincinnati Public Schools have seen enrollment grow faster than expected after it made significant investments in its facilities.

Superintendent's Final FY18 Budget Recommendation and Equity Analysis – Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans and Deputy Chief Financial Nate Kuder presented the Superintendent's final FY18 budget recommendation of \$1,060,932,783. Ms. Laurans accompanied the presentation with an equity analysis, explaining how the budget reflects the district's core values and the impact of enrollment changes on individual schools. The FY18 proposal, which includes a \$40 million increase over last year's appropriation, features a major investment in extending the school day. It also maintains current school funding formulas through Weighted Student Funding. Spending on school budgets and Extended Learning Time is projected to rise almost 4 percent even before collective bargaining reserves are used. The Superintendent acknowledged that reductions are being made at central office to support some of the investments. He thanked employees for their dedication to this collective work.

The Superintendent noted that BPS has nine new schools that have gone into Level 1 and 2 this year. As a result, 5,097 additional students are attending schools in these top designations this year. The district is also increasing its projections for Level 1 and 2 schools by an additional 600 students over last year's budget, providing more students with high quality seats.

Mr. O'Neill acknowledged the finance team for providing the equity analysis, which he called critical, and thanked the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM) for its input.

Dr. Uriarte expressed reservations that the district's budget process begins with enrollment projections. Mr. Kuder explained that the district has made efforts to improve the accuracy of enrollment projections in recent years and monitor them. Dr. Uriarte encouraged the district to consider the preparation of teachers and not just the characteristics of students when determining its weighted student funding formula. She also urged the district to lift the floor on its foundation budget. She also expressed concern about schools creating hybrid classrooms with English Language Learners and general education students. She also requested a study of student outcomes by type of program. Assistant Superintendent for the Office of English Language Learners Dr. Frances Esparza explained that BPS reports regularly to the US Department of Justice about the services BPS is providing to ELL students.

Ms. Regina Robinson requested more information on the Level 3 and Level 4 schools that reside in the high student growth neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, and East Boston.

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Ms. Jeri Robinson expressed concerned about cumulative impact of cuts at some schools. She encouraged the district to determine the financial baseline for fully funding schools.

Mr. O'Neill reminded that the Committee that BPS is a dependent school district and that federal and state funding is either declining or flat. The Committee must decide if the Superintendent is spending the district's money wisely. He thanked the Superintendent for providing more resources for Level 3 and Level 4 schools, which the Committee had encouraged. He also encouraged people to reach out their state representatives to support Mayor Walsh's education finance legislative proposal.

Mr. Loconto said that if the district is to consider ways to expand basic services in school foundation budgets, the district's Long-term Financial Plan provides a reasonable plan for developing new sources of revenue and finding operational efficiencies.

Sam Tyler, president of the Boston Municipal Research Bureau, provided a broader view of the BPS budget. Mr. Tyler explained that BPS has the largest budget of any city department, and that its budget has grown by 25% in recent years. Proposition Two and a Half limits taxable revenue. BPS has benefitted compared to other city departments. He also cited the benefits of an appointed school board. He said he felt encouraged by improvements to student enrollment projections and early hiring efforts, but concerned about excess capacity and spreading dollars too thin. He also encouraged the BPS finance team to produce a budget program book that contains a budget narrative, similar to the book produced in FY14. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the Superintendent's Final FY 18 recommendation on March 22.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

John Mudd, advocate, suggested that the Build BPS report should focus more on the Superintendent's education vision, and provide more guidance for parents about around the district's thought process. He also raised questions about excess capacity.

Megan Wolf, BPS parent and member, QUEST, questioned the district's decision to add more seats to Level 1 schools.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Coleman encouraged the district to consider launching a capital campaign to grow revenue for BPS. He also stated that the School Quality Working Group, which he chairs, recently reaffirmed its belief that a data driven approach promotes equity, and encouraged the district to remain data driven.

Ms. Regina Robinson requested an update about school climate from school leaders at the Mattahunt School, New Mission High School, BCLA, and Boston Latin School.

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ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

At approximately 11:18 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn to executive session

Attest:

Elizabeth Sullivan

Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary