



## OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

**March 23, 2016**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on March 23, 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](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto: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 Loonto; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte (arrived at 7 p.m.); and student representative Savina Tapia.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

### DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grants for approval totaling \$281,089

- Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant Program - \$137,888
- Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant - \$20,000
- Title I - \$123,201

Memo from Superintendent Chang to School Committee Members Re: FY17 Budget Vote dated March 21, 2016

Budget Basics

Responses to Questions Submitted by the School Committee to the Finance Team Regarding the Revised BPS Budget Submission

Updating School Year 2017 and 2018 Calendars

### CALL TO ORDER

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

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## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

The Superintendent made comments previewing tonight's presentation on proposed changes to the school calendar in school years 2017 and 2018. The district has conducted research on school absenteeism rates following the winter holiday recess. It is important to provide continuity to student learning as well as provide as much instructional time as possible before Advanced Placement exams. Any proposals to change the academic calendar will require negotiations with collective bargaining partners, including the Boston Teachers Union. The Superintendent looks forward to engaging BPS stakeholders in this conversation and said that no changes will occur until, at least, the 2017-18 school year.

Tonight the Superintendent is presenting to the School Committee a proposed \$1.027 billion FY 17 budget, which represents an increase of \$13.5 million over the previous school year and is the largest school budget in Boston history.

If the committee votes to approve the budget, it will be submitted to the Boston City Council for approval later this spring. This budget represents important work to close the opportunity and achievement gaps, while also addressing some challenges and tradeoffs due to continually rising costs. The Superintendent expressed confidence that the budget proposal is built on the district's values of equity, coherence and innovation.

The FY 17 budget makes targeted investments in:

- Early education, including adding more than 200 new pre-kindergarten seats next year. Early childhood education is one of the most research-proven ways to close the opportunity and achievement gaps.
- \$1 million for special education support teams, \$1 million for transition services, and \$1 million to fund a special education data system that will enhance parent access to their student's individualized education plan and provide BPS with better data to improve the quality of services.
- Additional investments in the Opportunity and Achievement Gap Office to the amount of \$500,000, an increase from the original proposal of \$248K.

Recently the district received encouraging information from the city regarding prospects of increased state funding for next year. This information allows the Superintendent to propose restoring the reductions the district had been planning to high school weights. The district will refrain from making several strategic investments until the state increases are finalized, however.

In addition, due to some great teamwork between Charlestown High School's leadership and the district's Central Office, BPS has been able to restore the Diploma Plus program at Charlestown High. This restoration would not have been possible without the generous financial support of Liberty Mutual, which has been a proud partner of the school since 1975. The Superintendent thanked all the Charlestown students who so eloquently advocated for this program.

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The Superintendent congratulated the New Mission/Boston Community Leadership Academy boys varsity basketball team for defeating Concord-Carlisle to earn their second Division 2 title in three seasons. Coach Cory McCarthy's team played stellar defense in the last three quarters to pull out a 52-48 win.

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, 125 BPS staff, from teachers and nurses, to bus monitors, social workers, and school psychologists, will participate in a day-long forum at the Bolling Building to address key elements of the new Social Emotional Learning and Wellness Framework. This new framework, called *Connect and Build: Creating a Shared Understanding of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness Opportunities*, will focus on:

1. Safe, Supportive, and Welcoming School Climate
2. Trauma-Responsive Practices
3. Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices
4. Multi-tiered Systems of Support
5. Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing

This week, schools started to distribute the BPS Student, Parent, and Teacher Climate surveys for school year 2015-16. Parents should be looking for the surveys to be sent home via backpacks. Additionally, surveys have been mailed directly to homes to make sure each parent receives a survey. Parents can also choose to complete the survey online if they prefer by visiting [www.bostonpublicschools.org/climatesurvey](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/climatesurvey). The Superintendent encouraged all of students, families and teachers to take this survey. It is a very important tool that provides the school system and individual schools important information about the climate of each school - such as student enthusiasm for learning; teacher and principal effectiveness; how safe and welcoming of environment the school is; as well as how thoroughly parents are engagement in the school. This critical information can help the district know more about the student, parent, and teacher experiences in BPS schools and also make important changes to the learning environment.

Boston Arts Academy has earned the prestigious 2016 GRAMMY Signature Schools Enterprise Award, which comes with a \$5,000 grant. The GRAMMY Foundation this year awarded a total of \$61,000 to 13 U.S. schools as Signature Schools winners. The program recognizes public high schools that make outstanding commitments to music education. Only eight schools, including Boston Arts Academy, earned the Enterprise Award grant, which recognizes the efforts made by schools that are economically underserved.

Boston Latin School 7th grader Emily Sun won the Boston Centers for Youth and Families Citywide Spelling Bee on Saturday. Emily now advances to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., this spring.

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

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## GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2017 budget proposal:

- Councilor Tito Jackson
- Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SpedPac)
- John St. Amand, vice-chair, SpedPac
- Michael Heichman, Boston resident
- Christine Lindstrom, co-chair, West Zone Early Learning Center Parent Council
- Christopher Hoeh, parent, Boston Latin School
- Lily Holland, teacher, Guild Elementary School
- Eve Kantakas, teacher, Guild Elementary School
- Keith Magni, teacher, Boston Community Leadership Academy (BCLA)
- Tonya Todesco, parent, Boston Arts Academy
- Marlena Rose, BPS grandparent, and member, Boston Education Justice Alliance
- Kelly Gil Franco, teacher, Guild Elementary School
- Lauren Nickell, community member and educator
- Miniard Culpepper, pastor, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
- Nicole Pelletier, teacher, BCLA
- Nicole Bahnam, former BPS headmaster
- Tabitha Kast-McBride, BPS student
- Karen Kast-McBride, BPS parent
- Nathaniel Coronado, student, Boston Latin Academy
- Akunna Eneh, BPS librarian
- Sera Tapia, student, Boston Latin Academy
- Megan Wolf, BPS parent, and member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST)
- Patricia Kinsella, parents, Boston Latin School and BCLA
- Frank Neisser, community activist
- Keeyan, student teacher, New Mission High School
- Rene Bernal, parent, Boston Latin School and Mendell Elementary School
- Judy Ayah, student, Community Academy of Science and Health (CASH)
- Andy Moxley, community member
- Sonia Chien, college student
- Kenny Jervis, BPS parent, and co-chair, Citywide Parents Council
- Mary Pierce, parent, Boston Teachers Union School
- Maria Farrell, parent, John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science

Josephine Taveres, Dudley Square Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) board member, testified regarding unified enrollment.

Committee Chairperson O'Neill noted that if the Committee failed to approve the revised budget proposal, the Superintendent's preliminary budget recommendation from February would automatically move on to the City Council.

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## **ACTION ITEMS**

*Approved* – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants totaling \$281,089.

Executive Director of School Finance Eleanor Laurans and Deputy Executive Director Nate Kuder presented an updated FY '17 budget to the School Committee. The budget presentation contained one change from last week's proposed budget: An additional \$197,336 for the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Office.

Ms. Jeri Robinson asked the district to review student progress (e.g. 2013 and 2014 graduates, etc.) to study the impacts of budget cuts on students over time and see if the district is creating its own achievement gap.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested the creation of a year-round budget task force.

School Committee members sympathized with many of the budget concerns expressed during public comment. Members noted that this budget does not get to the root of the problems of inequity across the system, adding that those major structural issues will need to be addressed in a strategic manner over time.

Ms. Tapia commented that the revised budget is preferable to the preliminary budget that was proposed.

*Approved* – On roll call, the Committee approved by a vote of 5-2 the Superintendent's final Fiscal Year 2017 budget recommendation in the amount of \$1,027,000,000.

The budget was approved by the following vote:

Mr. Loconto – Yes

Ms. Oliver-Davila – Yes

Ms. Jeri Robinson – Yes

Ms. Regina Robinson – No

Dr. Uriarte – No

Dr. Coleman – Yes

Mr. O'Neill – Yes

## **REPORTS**

*Updating School Year 2017 and 2018 Calendars* – Chief of Staff Makeeba McCreary outlined the Superintendent's proposed changes to the 2017 and 2018 school year calendars. The proposal includes starting the school year earlier and consolidating or extending long breaks and/or holidays. Dr. McCreary emphasized that BPS is in the very early stages of examining this issue and is always trying to provide improved educational opportunities for students. BPS attendance data shows an increase in absences on the days after Winter Break ends in early January. For the most recent three school years, this increase in absences was approximately 3 percent, which

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translates to as many as 1,500 students. BPS is continuing to study whether these absences are more pronounced in specific student population subgroups, such as English Language Learners (ELLs) and former ELLs. BPS is in the very early stages of studying and discussing potential changes to the school calendar, and will engage with families, staff, and stakeholders during this dialogue. BPS plans to provide a survey and many other opportunities for public feedback regarding potential calendar changes before any determinations are made.

School Committee members suggested asking parents for their preferences regarding any possible changes to the calendar. They also encouraged the district to optimize its use of energy resources and how school buildings are used.

***Superintendent’s Evaluation Process: Update on SMART Goals*** – Ms. Regina Robinson presented a brief update on the Superintendent’s evaluation process, which she is leading along with Mr. O’Neill and Dr. Coleman. In response to the Committee’s feedback on February 24, the evaluation tool now includes strategies on closing achievement gaps, and improving teaching and learning for all students to achieve at high levels.

The School Committee previously identified 10 indicators and 18 elements that will serve as the rubric for the Superintendent’s evaluation for school year 2015-16. Superintendent Chang has proposed seven specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) goals in the areas of professional practice, student learning, and district improvement. The Superintendent elected to add one additional goal to develop an “anti-racism” statement that ensures every student, regardless of race or ethnicity, is educated in a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Updates will be publicly posted and shared with School Committee members.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

#### **ADJOURN**

At approximately 9:50 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:

Danielle Crystal  
Secretary