



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

March 28, 2018

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on March 28, 2018 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 Loconto; Vice Chairperson Hardin Coleman; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Michael O’Neill; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Keondré McClay.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Grant for Approval: Opportunity Fund - Charlestown High School - \$1,000

International Travel Request: Charlestown High School – Denmark – May 30-June 5, 2018

International Travel Request: Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers – Spain – April 13-20, 2018

International Travel Request: Mary Lyon Pilot High School – Costa Rica – April 13-21, 2018

International Travel Request: Warren Prescott K-8 School – Costa Rica – April 12-19, 2018

Memo from Superintendent Tommy Chang to School Committee Members re: FY19 dated March 21, 2018

FY19 Updated Budget Tables – Account Summary and Details; Program Summary and Details; and Department Summary and Details – March 21, 2018

Update on Mattapan Early Elementary School Naming Process

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Mattapan Early Elementary School Naming Vote Impact Statement

Update on Transdev Contract

Transdev Extension Equity Impact Statement

State FY19 Budget and Legislative Advocacy

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Loconto called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the March 14, 2018 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Thank you all for being here this evening. We have a lot of important topics to discuss tonight, but I’d like to begin by thanking the young people of Boston. This past weekend, I was in awe of the sheer number of people — children, teenagers, and young adults, many of them our students — who spoke out very loudly on the issue of gun violence. Many of our students marched here in Boston; while others traveled to Washington, D.C., to join the national March for Our Lives movement. (Students from BLS, Fenway, O’Bryant, and other schools went to D.C.)

It’s a sad state of affairs when something as basic as safety — and taking common-sense measures to keep ourselves safe — has become politicized. But what is truly inspiring is our young people — seeing our youth advocating so passionately and eloquently on this important issue. Student activism has been a right part of American history — students have been agents of change during the Civil Rights movement, and the Vietnam War. Our public discourse has become so divided in this country. Because of that, I am not as optimistic that my generation — the adults — can bring closure to this gun violence epidemic. Our hope may lie in the hands of our young people. So I encourage all of the young people, no matter where you may fall on your beliefs about gun rights and gun violence, to help all of us as a country make meaning and help all of us move forward positively in decrease gun violence in our country. I also want to note that the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, which, this week, voted unanimously to adopt a measure opposing the idea of arming teachers.

145 teachers got a welcome surprise today from Donors Choose, which fully funded 186 classroom projects for BPS, totaling more than \$198,000. The crowd-funding website received a \$29 million donation from Ripple, a virtual currency start-up based in San Francisco. According to news reports, this is the largest virtual currency gift to charity ever.

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More than 35,000 classrooms nationwide benefited from this donation. Stephen Colbert announced this enormous gift on his TV show last night. We are always grateful to the community members, philanthropic partners, businesses, and organizations who donate to help students in the Boston Public Schools. Thank you, Donors Choose, for making a difference in the lives of our students.

Today, the Office of Engagement and Countdown to Kindergarten held “Dress Like Your Favorite Storybook Character” event at the Maverick Landing housing complex in East Boston. Children, parents, and BPS staff alike dressed up as their favorite storybook characters for this book-swap event for children ages 1-5. Our very own Captain America and Snow White made an appearance. Thanks to all the families who came out to get their students involved in learning and play at an early age; and thanks to all the hardworking Engagement staff who put this all together. What a wonderful event.

I would like to publicly congratulate the TechBoston Academy Bears boys’ basketball team for winning the Division 2 Championship in Springfield on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17th. It wasn’t luck as much as it was an aggressive, full-court-press-effort to win the game against Taconic High School, with a final score of 78-40. These young men worked so hard to clinch this championship; and they got a warm welcome home when they returned to Dorchester. The Ashmont Neighborhood Association actually posted signs in the neighborhood congratulating the team. Wonderful community spirit here. Congratulations to TechBoston for a job well done.

Yesterday, students participating in the Student Poll Worker program got to meet some of our local elected officials at City Hall, including Mayor Walsh, and City Councilors O’Malley, Flynn, and Flaherty. Organized by the BPS History and Social Studies Department and the City of Boston Election Department, the Student Poll Worker program allows students to serve as poll workers on Election Day — providing real-world learning in civic engagement. 48 students set up the polling places; serve as greeters, inspectors, and interpreters; count the ballots; and close the polls. This is a great way to empower students to become active citizens in their community; and it helps them understand that their voices matter. This marked the first year of the Student Poll Worker Program, which is now in 11 BPS high schools.

On March 9th, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of Succeed Boston, formerly known as the Counseling and Intervention Center. In that time, the center has served more than 26,000 BPS students experiencing violence-related difficulties at home, school, or in the community. The recent name change reflects a philosophical shift in our approach to serving students who violate the Code of Conduct. Succeed Boston continues to help students make positive choices and helps in our overall work of creating safe, welcoming, and sustaining environments for learning. I would like to thank Succeed Boston Senior Director Jodie Elgee, Assistant Superintendent of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness Amalio Nieves, and the rest of the SEL-WELL team for hosting a really nice celebration.

I would like to briefly highlight that I had the honor of speaking at the ASCD Empower 18 conference at the Boston Convention Center last Saturday. The conference for educators focused on various approaches to supporting the whole child and helping support student advancement.

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I had the honor of speaking shortly before former Second Lady and educator Dr. Jill Biden gave her address. It was a wonderful feeling to meet so many colleagues from around the country; and see them coming together in our city to learn how to best support our young people.

Finally, tonight, I would like to congratulate Boston School Committee Member Michael O'Neill. He has been elected Secretary-Treasurer to the Council of Great City Schools. Michael becomes one of four Council officers and part of the organization's leadership team for the 2018-19 school year. Mr. O'Neill was elected to move up to officer status by the Council's 140-member Board of Directors, the coalition's main policymaking body, which includes the superintendent and one school board member from each one of the group's 70-member big-city school districts. Congratulations, Mr. O'Neill.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila and Dr. Uriarte expressed support for student voice and encouraged the district to continue its support for student activism. Mr. Loconto congratulated Mr. O'Neill on his election as Secretary-Treasurer to the Council of Great City Schools. The School Committee then approved the Superintendent's Report by unanimous consent.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening, everyone. We are living in a crucial time in America, and students are the leaders not only of today but the leaders of tomorrow. We as students have taken change into our own hand. We thank all who paved the way and provided us with guidance throughout this journey. We would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Uriarte, and Superintendent Chang, for the continuous support of BSAC and youth through Boston.

Eight days ago in a conference room at the JFK School of Public Policy at Harvard BSAC, the Mayor's Youth council, St. Stephens Youth Program and students from Hanover met with Survivors of the Parkland Shooting. We discussed the different levels of organizing, civic engagement and holding elected officials accountable. We also discussed the importance of social and emotional supports inside and outside of the classroom and how this may impact urban youth of color.

March 14th was the National Walkout day that would last 17 minutes, one minute of each life lost. Unfortunately, we were unable to do the same, but we thank all those here that did not let the snow slow them down and proceeded to show up and out the State House.

I want to thank schools much like my own, EMK for having these conversation in the classroom and creating a way to honor those whose lives were taken as a result of gun violence. On the step of our schools, we tied ribbons to the railing, on these pieces of ribbon, we asked student to write the names of someone in your life that has been affected by gun violence. It is sad to see that many of us our impacted and we do not discuss what this means for us.

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On March 24, BSAC along with thousands of students and community members took part in the March for Our Lives Rally, which began at Madison Park Technical and Vocational High School and ended at the Boston Common with a queue of speakers, ranging from students, to teachers, to parents, and elected officials. We also give a special thanks to Mayor Walsh, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Boston City Councilors Annissa Essaibi-George and Kim Janey, and former Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson for sharing words of wisdom and support with students along the route to the commons.

I was absent at the last meeting but on behalf of BSAC, I would like to share how proud we are of our fellow member, Evelyn Reyes, for her passion and determination to make change beyond the walls of the classroom and delivering a fiery speech, dropping words of wisdom at the MA statehouse and the Boston School Committee, only to receive a unanimous standing ovation.

On a lighter note, some of our BSAC students had the opportunity to travel to Memphis, TN, to present some of our best practices in regards to students engaging students and our Student Right App, at the Youth Action Summit. Another group of BSAC students had a similar opportunity to lead a workshop at the 2018 Harvard Alumni of Color Conference.

We give a special thanks to Jacob Stern and his team for presenting on the district Performance Meter on this past Monday to BSAC and leading a conversation on how do we define success and how do you accurately measure it.

BSAC met with Councilor Essaibi-George about a month ago and discussed how to engage students in the Budget process. Councilor Essaibi-George and Councilor Ciommo have a proposal for engaging BSAC in the City Council Budget Hearings. This will insure an increased level of understanding not just for myself, but all BSAC students. Councilor Essaibi-George will share the guidelines for engaging BSAC in these conversations. We look forward to working with the Councilors.

Finally, I want to invite BPS Students to attend our 2nd BPS Town Hall that will be on Build BPS this Monday, April 2nd from 4-6pm here at the Bolling Building. BSAC will co-host the town hall with students from MassCOSH (Mass Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health). Please join us to learn, discuss and share your feedback in the process.

Ms. Jeri Robinson and Ms. Regina Robinson expressed support for student advocacy and encouraged students to practice self-care.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's final FY19 budget recommendation:

Phebean Ogunsanwo, student, Brighton High School
Eric Wong, BPS school psychologist
Alexis St. James, BPS school psychologist

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Laura Shachmut, BPS school psychologist
Jayme Rivas Robertson, parent, Quincy Elementary School
Ronnie Guzman, BPS school psychologist
Stephanie Tagg, BPS school psychologist
Allen Cohen, BPS school psychologist
Steve Sullivan, member, board of directors, Key Steps
Kristin Johnson, parent, Mendell Elementary School
Nicole Ferrara, BPS social worker
Megan Wolf, parent, Boston Latin School
Alex Freeman, BPS school psychologist
Darren Wells, member, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts
Jose Lopez, Roxbury resident

Erika Florence, Roxbury resident, advocated for a playground for the Higginson K-2 School.

Robert Jenkins, citizen, testified in support of the Mattapan Early Elementary School

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved a grant for approval in the amount of \$1,000.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for students and chaperones from Charlestown High School to travel to Denmark from May 30- June 5, 2018.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for students and chaperones from the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers to travel to Spain from April 13-20, 2018.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for students and chaperones from the Mary Lyon Pilot High School to travel to Costa Rica from April 13-21, 2018.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for students and chaperones from the Warren Prescott K-8 School to travel to Costa Rica from April 12-19, 2018.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved the payment of annual membership dues to the National School Boards Association in the amount of \$12,975.

The Superintendent highlighted revisions to his original budget proposal, which makes key investments in supporting English Learners; supporting Level 3, 4, and 5 schools; supporting social-emotional learning and wellness; and transitioning centrally-funded partnerships in a way that is more equitable.

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Committee members asked a number of clarifying questions about the budget and staffing for the Office of Social-Emotional Learning and Wellness (SELWell), all of which were answered by the Superintendent and his leadership team. Several members expressed concern about adequate staffing of student-facing SELWell positions, as well as the district's construction of the Opportunity Index and its impact on the East Boston community.

Dr. Coleman said that moving forward, the district must find new ways to effectively collaborated with outside agencies, and partner with city, state and federal officials to increase funding for BPS.

Chairperson Loconto thanked Mayor Walsh and the city's budget staff for increasing BPS' allocation by \$48 million over last year's budget. He expressed his appreciation to the Superintendent for adding investments in key areas and praised the district's long-term financial planning. He also praised the students, teachers, staff, parents, partners, and other stakeholders who shared their valuable feedback during the nearly two-month budget process. He requested that the district make a presentation to the Committee in the fall that details any changes to approved FY19 budget.

The Superintendent pledged to dedicate any additional funds that BPS may receive to provide additional social-emotional supports for students.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, the Superintendent's final Fiscal Year 2019 budget recommendation in the amount of \$1,108,740,327.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, a one-year contract extension with the district's third-party transportation provider, Transdev.

REPORTS

Mattapan Early Elementary School Naming – BPS Instructional Superintendent Mary Driscoll and Mattapan Early Elementary School Principal Walter Henderson reviewed the school naming process undertaken by the district, which included a robust engagement process. They then presented the Superintendent's recommendation to rename the school the Mattahunt Elementary School. In addition, the Superintendent is naming the Haitian Dual Language program the Toussaint L'Ouverture Dual Language Academy in honor of the leader of the Haitian independence movement.

Mr. Loconto requested that Committee receive a copy of the district's School Naming Policy and encouraged members of community to testify at the April 11th School Committee meeting, at which time the Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposal.

Members praised the district's public engagement process and expressed support for the new name which honors the Mattahunt legacy.

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State FY19 Budget and Legislative Advocacy – City of Boston Interim Intergovernmental Relations Director Katie King and Director of State Relations Kaitlin Passafaro provided the Committee with an overview of the challenges the City faces with the state’s current Chapter 70 funding model. Boston lost \$73 million over the past four years due to underfunding of the charter reimbursement, and is anticipated to lose another \$27 million in FY 19. Total education spending by the City of Boston has increase by \$170 over the same time period.

Without a change in how the state funds this critical local aid line item, the City of Boston will be left to make difficult budgetary decisions that will impact the quality of life for residents. Mayor Walsh has filed several piece of legislation to address the changing landscape of public education, with a focus on solutions to fix the challenges associated with state education aid. The Mayor’s priority requests to the state legislature are full funding of the charter school reimbursement (line item 7061-9010 at \$172 million and the passage of H. 3759 to guarantee every 4-year old in Boston access to a high quality pre-kindergarten seat.

Mr. O’Neill thanked Senator Chang-Diaz for her advocacy and noted that Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll has offered to join Boston in advocating for communities that are negatively impacted by the state’s charter reimbursement model. Mr. O’Neill requested full list of communities being negatively impacted.

Chairperson Loconto made a call to action, asking all BPS stakeholders to advocate for Chapter 70 reform. He proposed that the Committee formally communicate to the Boston Delegation about the district’s need for more resources. He said that the Committee intends to work more closely with the Citywide Parents Council, Boston Teachers Union and Boston Student Advisory Council on this critical issue. Mr. O’Neill suggested arranging a “Day on the Hill” to advocate for more funding for Boston.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. O’Neill congratulated Xavier Andrews, a BPS alumnus who was recently appointed deputy director of communications.

ADJOURN

At approximately 9:55 p.m. the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary