



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

April 25 2018

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on April 25, 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; and student representative Keondré McClay.

School Committee Members Absent: Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Grants for Approval Totaling \$168,373:

- STEM Initiatives - Madison Park- \$125,000
- Reading Recovery: Massachusetts Early Literacy - 22 sites districtwide - \$43,373

Superintendent's Memo: Interim Salary and Non-Personnel Payments on External Funds

Boston School Committee and Custodians Collective Bargaining Agreement: 2016-2020

Boston School Committee and Custodians Collective Bargaining Agreement Equity Impact Statement

2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Results PowerPoint

2017 NAEP Results Equity Impact Statement

Dorchester Academy Update PowerPoint

School Committee Meeting
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
School Committee Chamber

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Dorchester Academy Update Equity Impact Statement

Boston School Committee Letter to Boston Delegation, April 23, 2018

Boston School Committee Letter to MA House Ways and Means Committee, April 23, 2018

CALL TO ORDER

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

CITATIONS

The Committee members and Superintendent presented citations to the following honorees:

Bonnie McBride, library teacher, Fenway High School - recipient of the Massachusetts School Library Association's 2018 President's Award

Morgan Van Clief, library teacher, P.A. Shaw Elementary School - recipient of the Massachusetts School Library Association's 2018 President's Award

Susan Harari, library teacher, Boston Latin School - recipient of the Massachusetts School Library Association's 2018 Super Librarian Award for Program Excellence

Maura O'Toole, library paraprofessional, Mather Elementary School - recipient of the Massachusetts School Library Association's Audrey Friend Scholarship

MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the April 11, 2018 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening. I hope everyone had a chance to rejuvenate themselves over the spring recess.

I had the pleasure last week of speaking on the Innovation Opportunity Gap at the ASU GSV Summit, where I was accompanied by several people from Team BPS, including Cory McCarthy from New Mission and Amy DeMatteo from the Dearborn. In my speech, I emphasized that our most underserved students are also underserved in innovation. We have innovation deserts in our leading edge Innovation Economy city. Too often innovation is seen as the icing on the cake rather than the cake itself, so we need to redesign our systems to enable innovation to be baked into the cake. This means student-centered systems, broader definitions of student success, innovation for all, not just those meeting or exceeding current definitions of success. We need to

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leapfrog, to give our underserved students an extra edge – give them opportunities that are ten years ahead. I also visited Vista High School in California where I saw a collaboration between an Air Force ROTC instructor working on aviation certification and a photography teacher working with aerial imaging. Together they were building an inspiring program that certified students in drone piloting, navigation, and photography.

In a presentation that we will give later tonight, we will delve into the district's results in the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as "The Nation's Report Card." Boston Public Schools is one of only two large school districts nationwide to make a significant gain in eighth-grade reading. We are also one of only six districts, out of 27 total participating in a group of large public school districts, to make significant gains since 2015 on NAEP, and one of eight districts to make significant gains over the past decade.

We are proud of this growth, and credit the hard work of our educators and students for achieving these accomplishments. It is encouraging to see such improvement. However, there are also some results that show we are not closing the achievement gap for certain subgroups as much as we should be. While the overall results are going in the right direction, we realize we have a lot more work to do in closing achievement gaps, as do our colleagues in most other large, urban districts across the country. Closing the achievement gap really matters. It's one of the major priorities that drives our work.

Members of my leadership team will also give a presentation tonight on our proposal to close Dorchester Academy, which the State placed into Level 4 "Turnaround" status in 2014 for underperformance on MCAS. During that report, we will explore in detail our rationale for this proposal. I would like to take a few minutes now to emphasize that Boston Public Schools is committed to alternative education. However, we must ensure that we are providing this programming in a sustainable manner; and that all students have access to essential programming to keep them on the path to success.

Over the past year, BPS leaders have been working tirelessly with the dedicated teachers at Dorchester Academy to improve the academic programs and graduation outcomes for each student. Although student performance has improved greatly this year, the number of students in the school is so small that there is not a sufficient cohort of students sustainable to show progress on standardized testing, which is necessary to exit Level 4. The district and Dorchester Academy staff have given careful consideration about how to continue to support the few remaining students through to graduation. In the end, we determined that it is in the best interest of these students to continue their learning in an alternative setting at Excel High School. The program is going to be designed to be tailored to each student's individual needs and the path they need to be on for graduation; along with expanding their opportunities for college and career exploration. BPS will support the continued development of this alternative education program in an environment that will provide students greater access to the academic and social supports needed to reach graduation and life goals.

Now onto some bright spots. Spring recess is when hundreds of BPS students get a chance to travel overseas to explore foreign lands and immerse themselves in new cultures. Last week, 265

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student-travelers — up from 238 last April — along with 100 district trip leaders — 25 more than last year — embarked on cross-cultural learning experiences in 9 countries, from Costa Rica and the Czech Republic to China and Spain. History scholars from English High visited ancient ruins in Athens. Snowden and New Mission students participated in history and language-immersion experiences in Japan. Also, new this year, students from three BPS high schools — Fenway, Boston Green Academy and Boston Arts Academy — fundraised and planned week-long service learning trips to help rebuild hurricane-ravaged neighborhoods in Puerto Rico and Houston, TX. This April, 20 percent of our student travelers were from elementary and middle schools. In fact, this was the first time the Warren/Prescott K-8 School sent students on an international trip: a group of its 6th-graders joined peers from the Lee school on a biodiversity tour of Costa Rica — zip-lining in the rainforest, exploring UNESCO World Heritage Sites, seeing a volcano and volunteering at a local school. Our student's response to global calls to action and their willingness to devote vacation time for more learning and service truly highlights the essence of Boston Public School students and their thirst for global connections.

Students and their chaperones weren't the only ones who got to travel. A number of BPS educators and administrators participated in three unique international professional development programs. Excellence for All (EFA) sponsored a STEM PD field trip to Finland and Estonia where BPS representatives, including many from EFA schools, studied the integration of coding and robotics in elementary and secondary curricula. They also explored how Finnish and Estonian educators have created robust 21st century learning experiences for all students by strategically infusing technology and multi-disciplinary projects in all content areas from the earliest grades in order foster a culture of rigor and innovation. Excellence for All Manager Regine Philippeaux-Pierre said the participants all came back energized, with a renewed sense of purpose, and look forward to implementing what they learned.

BPS representatives also traveled to Brazil where they learned about the Afro Brazilian history and culture, visiting Salvador da Bahia – Brazil's 'Black Rome,' and getting to understand how Brazilians view race relative to the social class, diverse culture, and history. Another group explored Cuba "*Through the Arts*," creating art with Cuban students and teachers and getting mentored by Cuban artists, attending classic and emerging-arts performances, and discovering why this nation is so committed to creative expression.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston hosted BPS teachers Nilufer Johnson, Javier Garcia and Jeff Durney, as well as Digital Learning Specialist Nick Gonzales, for a week-long pilot "externship" program during April vacation. The partnership exposed the teachers to emerging technologies and IT operations, so they are more equipped to mentor students on STEM careers and education options. During the week, the educators spoke with previous Boston Fed interns about their experiences. At the end of the week, they presented lessons plans they intend to incorporate in their classrooms, applying what they learned from the program, and they received their certificates of completion.

Earlier this week, I joined more than 30 members of the Mastery Transcript Consortium, or MTC, network who came from as far away as Hawaii and London for a gathering here at the Bolling Building that focused on transforming the high school experience by changing the

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student transcript. Among them was our own Sujata Bhatt, BPS managing partner of Innovation. MTC believes the high school transcript is a broken instrument that no longer serves the student and teacher outside the school walls. The work it's doing has the potential to fundamentally change what education looks like. Some of the big questions we grappled with are: "How do we measure students? What do we value?"

In sharing my vision, I explained that education should be about learning across subjects, personalized learning, the ability to demonstrate skills and content knowledge through authentic tasks. MTC is working toward these goals, which is why I support the organization as a thought partner in figuring out how this new model will work in schools.

Yesterday, two East Boston High School seniors and "Scholar Athletes" got the surprise of a lifetime when they were each awarded 4-year, full-tuition college scholarships in front of their families and school community. These scholarships are the result of a partnership between Scholar Athletes and Curry and Regis colleges. Scholar Athletes works to close opportunity and achievement gaps by supporting student achievement through athletics. When its Scholar Athletes are not in class or playing their sport of choice, they are in a dedicated spaced, called a Zone, where with the help of staff they work on homework, write college essays, learn about scholarship options, and develop a road map for life after high school.

East Boston High Senior Kayla Elliot, who will attend Curry College, has earned a 5.2 cumulative GPA and plans to pursue a career in nursing. She is a member of the National Honor Society and captain of her varsity softball team. Her classmate, Juliane Jorge, who will attend Regis College, earned a 5.05 cumulative GPA and is also a two-sport athlete, and captains her volleyball and basketball teams. She is also a member of the National Honor Society. Both young women are residents of East Boston and members of the East Boston High School Athlete Zone.

Scholar Athletes Executive Director Daphne Griffin noted that both young women "represent the best of Scholar Athletes and of the Boston Public Schools. They have truly earned these scholarships and this recognition." Their high school athletic coaches lauded the students as not just star players and leaders on the field and court, but also in the classroom. Congratulations to both Kayla and Juliane. Curry and Regis colleges are getting two exemplary BPS students.

Students from across the district today participated in the 8th-annual citywide "Talk, Read, Play" Day across. An initiative of BPS' Countdown to Kindergarten program, "Talk, Read, Play" promotes speaking, reading, and engaging with children, particularly in the critical years of early childhood development. Students and young children at several locations, including the Perkins School and the Children's Museum, participated in a collective "Flash Rhyme Mob" to promote the campaign. They recited rhymes, songs, and poems in unison at libraries, community centers, and schools throughout the city.

As a reminder, BPS Got Talent – the district's first ever district wide talent show – launched today and is open to all K-12 BPS students who want to showcase their creativity on social media. From now through May 21, any BPS student can submit a video or photo of their special

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talent — including singing, rapping, photography, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, spoken-word poetry or monologues, or playing musical instruments. To enter, submit a video at externalaffairsbps.org/bgt or via the BPS Office of External Affairs' Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter accounts using the hashtag #BPSGotTalent. Share your entry with friends and family to improve your chances! That concludes my report for tonight.

Mr. O'Neill congratulated the library teachers and staff who received citations and thanked Ms. O'Toole for her advocacy.

Mr. Loconto said that the MA Supreme Judicial Court made an important ruling in favor of public schools on April 23; he encouraged people to read the court's opinion on the SJC website. He added that the School Committee issued letters yesterday to the MA House Ways and Means Committee, MA Senate Ways and Means Committee, and the Boston delegation advocating for education funding reforms. Copies of the letters were made available at the meeting and are posted on the School Committee webpage at www.bostonpublicschools.org.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Alliberthe Elysee, teacher, Higginson K0-2 School, advocated for the creation of a playground at the school.

Pernell Banks, parent, Higginson K0-2 School, advocated for the creation of a playground at the school.

Mossik Hacobian, Boston Higher Ground, advocated for the creation of a playground at the Higginson K0-2 School.

Gaytra Lovett, parent, Dorchester Academy, spoke about her positive experience at the school.

Andrew Manning, teacher, Dorchester Academy, spoke about his positive experience at the school.

Jonathan Maltez, alumnus, Dorchester Academy, spoke about his positive experience at the school.

Maggie Reis, senior program director, Dorchester Academy, spoke about her positive experience at the school.

Zainab Hussein, alumna, McCormack Middle School, and resident of Harbor Point, testified regarding the Superintendent's proposal to subdivide a parcel of land for educational and community use.

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ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Loconto thanked Liberty Mutual for providing grant support. He then invited Madison Park Technical Vocational High School Executive Director Kevin McCaskill to provide details of the STEM Initiatives grant.

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$168,373.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, interim salary and non-personnel payments on external funds.

Mr. O’Neill praised the tentative collective bargaining agreement between the Committee and the custodians, thanking custodians for their work.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, a collective bargaining agreement between the School Committee and Local Union 1952, Painters & Allied Trades, District Council No. 35 (Custodians), effective September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2020.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, the Superintendent’s Fiscal Year 2018 supplemental appropriation request to the Boston City Council in the amount of \$1,013,216 to support the collective bargaining agreement between the Boston School Committee and Local Union 1952, Painters & Allied Trades District Council No. 35 (Custodians) from 2016-2020.

Mr. O’Neill requested information about the district’s outstanding collective bargaining agreements. The Superintendent agreed to follow up.

REPORTS

2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress Results – Nicole Wagner Lam, executive director of the BPS Office of Data and Accountability, presented the district’s results in the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Some of the highlights include:

- In 4th and 8th-grade Reading and Mathematics, BPS’ performance held steady as compared to 2015; including remaining on par with the National average in 8th grade Mathematics.
- In 8th grade Reading, BPS was one of only two Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) school districts to make a statistically significant improvement (from an average scaled score of 258 in 2015 to 261 in 2017).
- In 4th and 8th grade Mathematics, BPS’ performance with a key set of student subgroups (African-American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, low income students, student with disabilities, and English Learners) was statistically equivalent or higher than the National average and that of Large Cities.

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While BPS performs well with this key set of student subgroups in comparison to other TUDA districts, the nation, as well as the Large City sample, achievement gaps within BPS still persist.

Mr. O'Neill talked about the value of the NAEP data, which allows the district to compare the performance of BPS students with their peers across the nation. The Superintendent said that he sits on a newly-formed TUDA Task Force that is a collaboration between the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP, and the Council of Great City Schools, a coalition of 70 of the nation's largest urban school districts. The 10 district leaders on the task force will share how they use and disseminate TUDA data as a means of understanding and promoting best practices. The leaders also will offer feedback to the Governing Board and the National Center for Education Statistics to inform NAEP policies and the TUDA program.

The Superintendent expressed some concerns about student performance in the lower grades. Assistant Superintendent of Academics Dr. Doannie Tran spoke about the district's efforts to strengthen curriculum in grades 3-5. Mr. O'Neill said that it is important for the district to demonstrate to parents the value of formative assessments.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the district to explore alternative methods for measuring student performance. The Superintendent responded by saying that, next month, he will present to the Committee the BPS Performance Meter, which uses a variety of measures to examine student performance. Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed concern about the widening of achievement gaps.

Dr. Coleman expressed concern that only 30 percent BPS students are entering high school on track to be college and career ready, saying that the district needs to drive change.

Dorchester Academy Update – Deputy Superintendent of Strategy Dr. Donna Muncey and Executive Director of Strategy Dan Anderson presented the Superintendent's recommendation to close Dorchester Academy as a school at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. In 2014, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) placed Dorchester Academy into Level 4 status. The school never had enough students taking MCAS assessments to provide sufficient evidence of academic progress to be considered for exit of Level 4 under the state accountability system. Last summer, after two years of ABCD operating the school, Dorchester Academy returned to full operation by BPS. The majority of DA's current students are on-track to graduate in June. Under the Superintendent's proposal, the remaining one-to-three students, in addition to DA's teaching staff, would move to Excel High School, which is expanding its alternative education program. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposal on May 9th.

Committee members asked questions about the Superintendent's rationale for the proposal, all of which were answered by the presenters and the Superintendent. Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the district to prioritize alternative education. Mr. O'Neill agreed, saying that BPS needs a robust alternative education program. Dr. Coleman said that the needs to focus on student performance in grades K-8, and expressed concern that the state accountability system punishes districts that

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have alternative education models. Mr. Loconto said that he looks forward to learning more about the district's plan for serving off-track youth.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, asked when the next phase of Build BPS, the district's 10-year facilities master plan, will be released.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the 2017 NAEP report. He encouraged the district to share lessons learned, as well as its response.

Megan Wolf, BPS parent and member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding the Superintendent's proposal to close Dorchester Academy.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 9:04 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.



Attest:
Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary