



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

May 11, 2016

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on May 11, 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, email 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 Loconto; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Savina Tapia.

School Committee Member Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grants for Approval Totaling \$222,234:

- High School Graduation Rates and Postsecondary Readiness Among First Language is Not English (FLNE) Students (Fund Code 695) - \$3,000
- Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriation - \$64,344
- Safe and Supportive Schools Action Plan - \$154,890

International Travel Request: Boston Latin Academy – Ireland and Scotland – June 27-July 4, 2016

International Travel Request: Excel High School – Malawi – June 27-July 6, 2016

International Travel Request: Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers – Canada – May 27-June 3, 2016

Update on Drinking Water Policy

School Renaming Proposal: William E. Carter Development Center to William E. Carter School

Boston Basics

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Build BPS: An Update on the 10-Year Facilities Master Plan

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order. He announced that the microphones, which have been experiencing technical difficulties, will soon be replaced under warranty.

CITATIONS

The School Committee and Superintendent presented citations to the following winter sport state champions:

Ashley Lewis
Boston Latin Academy
2016 State Champion, Indoor Track and Field, 600 meters

Garcia Dalzon
Head Coach, Indoor Track and Field, East Boston High School
2016 Division 2 Coach of the Year

Boston Latin School Fencing Team
2016 State Champions

New Mission High School/BCLA Boys Basketball Team
2016 Division 2 State Champions

MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the April 27, 2016 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

At the last school committee meeting, the Superintendent made remarks about coherence, one of the key values that have driven the district's strategic implementation planning. Tonight, he spoke about another key value: innovation.

Innovation should serve a greater purpose, to solve the world's problems. The Superintendent played a brief You Tube video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJT0UAzm_hI that discusses how a group of students conceptualized an innovative incubator for premature babies by using empathy to gain inspiration and reframe the problem. The incubator costs around \$25 dollars as opposed to the standard \$20,000 incubator.

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BPS must provide students with 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. These skills are required in the type of cognitively demanding tasks the district should expect young people to perform. They require students to work in environments that are diverse racially, culturally and linguistically. They require our students to be innovative and problem solvers.

Here in Boston's innovation-driven economy, BPS must develop our young people to become innovators, and adults must practice transform their own learning in order to inspire excellence for students. Adults must model perseverance, passion and purpose every day.

That is why the Superintendent's strategic implementation plan focuses on implementing inclusive, rigorous and culturally/linguistically sustaining practices that develop the whole child. BPS must attract and retain a highly effective team that is responsive to the diverse need of Boston youth. It must also engage families, communities, and partners in this work. High Schools must be redesigned by integrating rigorous academics that meet college-ready standards with high-quality career-technical education, work-based learning, and supports to help all students graduate college and career ready.

The BPS Educational and Facilities Master Planning process is an opportunity to reimagine space and learning in Boston's public schools. The world is changing at a staggering pace and young people must be prepared for a world that is changing exponentially.

The Superintendent asked principal leaders to introduce newly appointed school leaders:

- Principal Leader Jonathan Landman introduced **Emily Bozeman, Brighton High School** **Geoffrey Walker, Fenway High School** (not present)
- Principal Leader Mary Driscoll introduced **Carmen Davis, Irving Middle School, Andrew Vega, Bates Elementary School, and Samantha Varano, Edison School**
- Principal Leader Alex Montes-McNeil introduced **Monakatellia Ford, Winship Elementary School**
- Principal Leader Tommy Welch introduced **Claudia Gutierrez , Mario Umana Academy**
- Principal Leader Christine Landry introduced **Elvis Henriquez, McCormack Middle School**

Recently, Dr. Frances Esparza, Assistant Superintendent, Office of English Language Learners (OELL), was invited to the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C., to share the district's efforts on supporting undocumented students. One example of this took place on April 26th, when BPS participated in "Unafraid Educators Day" to raise awareness of undocumented students, families, and staff. Participants posted signs showing their solidarity, used hashtags on social media, and schools were encouraged to invite in speakers from partner organizations. On April 21st, OELL also hosted the first "We Dream Together" college and career resource fair for immigrant students and families at the Bolling Building.

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On Friday, June 3rd, in collaboration with School Committee member Jeri Robinson, the final District English Language Learner Parent Conference for the school year will be held at the Boston Children's Museum. Elections for the ELL Parent Advisory Committee will be held, so all parents are encouraged to participate.

BPS has been invited to exhibit student artwork at the U.S. Department of Education in Washington D.C., as part of the Student Art Exhibit Program. The program provides students and teachers an opportunity to display creative work from the classroom in a highly public place, which honors their work as an effective path to learning. The exhibit opened on May 6th, and included a performance by the Boston Arts Academy Electric Ensemble, along with award-winning videos from the BPS Adobe Youth Voices Program. The BPS exhibit, which is on display until June 30th, includes 68 pieces of art from BPS students in grades K through 12. The work was selected based on craftsmanship, use of medium and mastery of technique, originality, purposeful communication, and effectively using the elements and principles of art. The Superintendent congratulated the students who participated and thanked the BPS staff who facilitated.

The Superintendent displayed an image of the Boston city skyline that is made up of 700 self-portraits by students in Autism Strand classrooms. The image was presented at the Autism Awareness Luncheon that was held last month in the Bolling Building. Prints are currently being sold by the BPS Special Education Office, ranging from \$1 to \$5, with proceeds going directly to the students of the Autism Program. For more information, call Seph Bartholomew, assistant director of special education, at (617) 635-8599.

Ms. Regina Robinson congratulated the newly appointed school leaders and said she was glad to see such diversity.

Ms. Jeri Robinson said innovation begins in the K-2 curriculum.

Mr. O'Neill applauded the school leadership appointments, noting that many have experience working in BPS and have attended local universities.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Jodi Then, parent, Channing Elementary School, testified regarding budget concerns.

Marisol Negron, parent, Hernandez K-8 School, testified regarding concerns about drinking water quality.

Diana Preusser, parent, Another Course to College, testified regarding adding a charter bus from Brighton to Hyde Park.

Megan Wolf, BPS parent, testified regarding the McKinsey Report.

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John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the efforts of the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force to update the policy.

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac), testified in favor of the Carter Development Center name change proposal. She also announced that BPS and SpedPac are hosting a transition services conference this Saturday, May 14th at 10 a.m. at the Bolling Building. Ms. Kain was recently named the first executive director of the Massachusetts Autism Commission.

Nancy Cajuste, parent, and Myra, second grader, Channing Elementary School, testified regarding budget concerns.

Mary Battenfeld, member, Citywide Parents Council, testified regarding concerns about drinking water quality.

Anna Ross, parent, Mather Elementary School, testified regarding concerns about drinking water quality.

Ann Greenly-Williams, parent, Curley K-8 School, testified regarding concerns about drinking water quality and availability.

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Loconto praised the workforce competitiveness grant that will benefit Madison Park Technical Vocational High School. Mr. O'Neill requested an update from Madison Park's leadership team about the school's partnerships.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, Committee unanimously approved grants totaling \$222,234.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international field trip for students and chaperones from Boston Latin Academy to travel to Ireland and Scotland from June 27-July 4, 2016.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international field trip for students and chaperones from Excel High School to travel to Malawi from June 27-July 6, 2016.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international field trip for students and chaperones from the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers to travel to Canada from May 27-June 3, 2016.

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REPORTS

Update on Drinking Water Policy – Assistant Superintendent of Operations Kim Rice presented an update on the Superintendent’s revised drinking water policy proposal, which she first presented on April 13, 2016. Ms. Rice said that, per suggestion of Committee members, communication protocols will be incorporated into the new water policy that will be presented to the Committee for consideration.

The district has identified eight schools where children may have drunk from water fountains with lead levels above the federal standard of 15 parts per billion in recent months. The district is conducting an investigation into how and why some drinking fountains were activated prematurely. Family information sessions featuring testimony from water quality and health experts were held earlier this week. A video of the information sessions, along with testing results, protocols, and supports, is posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/water.

Dr. Sean Palfrey, director of the Boston Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at the Boston Public Health Commission, and pediatrician at Boston Medical Center, has made it very clear that any risk to children who drank from these fountains is extremely low. The Superintendent said he is confident that all functioning water fountains in Boston Public Schools meet state and federal standards and are safe for students and staff to use. He added that the district will now test all schools with working water fountains every year.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested that district build trust with families by holding school-based information sessions at the impacted schools.

Dr. Uriarte expressed concern about the relatively low turn-out for the family information sessions.

Mr. O’Neill encouraged families to read the complete BPS water testing report online, noting that the results were triple verified.

Mr. Loconto encouraged the district to share widely the information presented by water experts and public health experts in an effort to reach families. He also suggested that new water policy outline how schools can order and replenish their bottled water supply.

Mr. O’Neill asked the Superintendent and his team to present a revised drinking water policy recommendation on May 25th and scheduled a tentative vote for June 8th.

Ms. Jeri Robinson encouraged all children to get lead tested to establish a baseline, noting that many older homes have lead pipes.

Mr. O’Neill encouraged BPS to work closely with Boston Public Health Commission to make lead testing easily accessible. He also said that BPS should have a lower threshold for acceptable lead levels than the state. He also urged district leaders to provide more information to Mather School parents about how communications decisions were made.

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School Renaming Proposal: William E. Carter Development Center to William E. Carter School – Principal Mark O’Connor presented a proposal to formally change the name of the William E. Carter Development Center to the William E. Carter School to better reflect the teaching and learning that takes place there. Jacqueline Correia, Carter parent, testified in support of the name change. Mr. O’Connor also announced that the Carter Garden Party fundraiser will be held on the school grounds on June 3rd at 11 a.m.

Ms. Regina Robinson said she is impressed with the Carter’s family engagement efforts and expressed support for the name change. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposal on May 25th.

Boston Basics – Education Chief Rahn Dorsey, Dr. Ron Ferguson, Jeff Howard, Wendell Knox, Barry Zuckerman presented a report on Boston Basics – five evidence-based parenting and caregiving principles that encompass much of what experts find is important for children from birth to age three. Every child from every background can benefit from routinely experiencing Boston Basics learning experiences. Therefore, the Boston Basics Initiative is working through a broad range of institutions to ensure that every parent and caregiver is fully supported by family and friends to use the Boston Basics practices in everyday life. The basic principles are: maximize love, manage stress; talk, sing and point; count, group, and compare; explore through movement and play; and read and discuss stories. A major goal of the initiative is to increase school readiness. The campaign includes outreach, fundraising, and the development of materials. More information is available at www.bostonbasics.org, including videos in English and Spanish, with other languages forthcoming.

School Committee members praised program for its simplicity, saying it hits all the right targets and could be an important strategy to prevent achievement gaps.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the presenters to develop materials that highlight the value of bilingualism. Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the presenters to extend their outreach to faith-based organizations. Mr. O’Neill suggested that Rev. Gregory Groover, former School Committee Chair and pastor of the Historic Charles Street AME Church, get involved. Mr. Loconto encouraged the presenters to extend their outreach to the Boston Housing Authority and connect with existing BPS collaborations.

Build BPS: An Update on the 10-Year Facilities Master Plan – Deputy Superintendent Barbara Deane-Williams, Margaret Wood, Project Manager, Pinck & Co., and Alex Pitkin and Lorraine Finnegan of SMMA, presented an update on the district’s 10-Year Master Facilities Planning Process, Build BPS. The project launched in September, 2015. Facilities assessments began in January and should wrap up by late June. Advisory groups are working in the areas of demographics, educational planning, facility assessment, finance, and community engagement. This summer, the teams will develop recommendations. The presenters explained that two-thirds of BPS buildings were constructed prior to WWII. Only 10 percent were built since 1980. The district currently has 19 different grade configurations and has seen a decline in enrollment in grades 5-8. They noted that enrollment is not keeping pace with the city’s housing growth. More information is available at www.buildbps.org, including a survey that’s available in nine

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languages. People can also sign up to receive an e-newsletter and discuss the plan on Twitter using #buildbps. The Superintendent will host a public information event in August, and present formal updates to the School Committee this fall. The final facilities master plan report is expected to be complete in January, 2017. Recommendations that are presented will include funding options.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested that the Superintendent consider holding the family information session in September after summer vacation ends. She also encouraged the Build BPS team to look at safe routes.

Mr. Loconto asked about various engagement events. The Build BPS team plan to hold an event in June at which the advisory groups will report out and solicit feedback. It is also utilizing digital communication and conducting personal outreach through the Boston Housing Authority. The Superintendent's August event will bring together school leaders, students and parents to engage in design thinking and generate multiple solution sets. Mr. Loconto called for robust public engagement throughout the process.

Ms. Jeri Robinson emphasized the importance of student voice and encouraged the Build BPS team to work with community-based organizations and to make sure that space for the arts is considered.

Dr. Uriarte asked about the team's approach to grade configurations. The presenters said they will look at capacity, physical condition, and whether the building is suited for the grades they are serving, as well as community use.

Dr. Coleman said he is looking forward to learning about funding options. He also requested clarification around the accuracy of the McKinsey Report. Mr. O'Neill said that the McKinsey Report presented a range of ideas for consideration that were meant to provoke thinking. Build BPS will be much more substantive and dig deeper into facilities and programs. The presenters conformed that the Build BPS report will be a substantive report that contains data the district can believe and use.

SMMA demographers are using several different models to study gentrification.

Dr. Uriarte and Mr. O'Neill encouraged the Build BPS team to look at demographic shifts in other cities, including San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. and Baltimore.

Mr. O'Neill encouraged the Build BPS team to seek input from outside financial experts and engage BPS students in summer internships. He also encouraged the team to hold informational meetings in various neighborhoods to solicit a broad range of feedback.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested that the presenters look at the High School Redesign team's community engagement model.

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PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10:22 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:

Elizabeth Sullivan

Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary