



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING AND MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL CHOICE HEARING

May 25, 2016

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on May 25, 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; Michael Loconto; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and student representative Savina Tapia.

School Committee Members Absent: Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grants for Approval Totaling \$102,452

- ECET2 – Elevating and Celebrating Effective Teachers and Teaching - \$28,000
- Enhancing Support for Students in Poverty Grant (Fund Code 323) - \$25,952.
- Special Education Program Improvement Grant (Fund Code 274) - \$6,000.
- Work and Learning Planning Grant (Fund Code 596) - \$7,500.
- Work and Learning Planning Summer (Fund Code 597) - \$35,000.

International Travel Request: Community Academy of Science and Health – Malawi – July 24-August 6, 2016

Memo: Massachusetts School Choice Plan, School Year 2016-2017

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

P-2 Reform and Alignment: A Strong Start for Boston’s Youth

Updated BPS Water Policy

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MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL CHOICE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

The School Committee held a public hearing concerning Boston Public Schools' participation in the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2016-17 school year. There were no speakers.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the hearing and begin the regular School Committee meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

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

MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the May 11, 2016 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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

The Boston Public Schools has made significant strides to improve equity. Graduation rates for Black and Hispanic students have been steadily improving since 2006, with a 10.1 point gain for Black students and a 9.2 point gain for Hispanic students. Dropout rates overall have been cut by almost a third. More minority students are taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes than ever before.

However, with a history of proficiency gaps among students based on race, economic status, language differences, the district must continue to put equity at the forefront. Current efforts include:

- The School Committee charged the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force (OAGTF) to create a new policy for Boston Public Schools.
- Expanded opportunities for 5th graders to participate in the Exam School Initiative, focusing on schools that have not been as represented in past years.
- Many of district and school leaders attended the 2016 COSEBOC (Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color) Conference. This organization is creating plans to end racial inequities and promote a counter-narrative for boys of color in Boston Public Schools.
- Yesterday, BPS hosted an organization from Chicago called Youth Guidance to better learn about their BAM (Becoming a Man) program that focuses on counseling support to help young men navigate difficult circumstances that threaten their future.
- The central office leadership team has brought race to the center of its conversations, engaging in race dialogues facilitated by YWBoston over the last two months.

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BPS must continue to celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity of students. Through my own personal experience, the Superintendent has learned to appreciate the importance of culturally-sustaining pedagogy.

- Utilizing culturally and linguistically sustaining practices engage students in rigorous and inclusive learning experiences using their culture, prior experiences, perspectives, and styles of learning.
- Utilizing culturally and linguistically sustaining practices creates learning environments that are more relevant and effective in promoting academic achievements
- Utilizing culturally and linguistically sustaining practices teaches through the strengths of students and is culturally validating and affirming.

In order for all students to achieve at high levels, the district must:

- Work to end the cycle of predictability of success or failure based on any racial, social or cultural factor.
- Interrupt inequitable practices that perpetuate opportunity and achievement gaps.
- Discover and cultivate the cultural and linguistic strengths of staff and students.
- Design a school system that integrates with family, community, businesses, higher education, city, etc.
- And most importantly, implement an instructional program and improve teaching and learning.

Tomorrow's jobs are going to need employees that can collaborate in a pluralistic society, who can communicate in multiple languages and multiple forms, and who can think critically in order to solve problems that often deal with issues of diversity. It is the district's job to prepare students so they are equipped to be successful when they are "sitting at the table" in the jobs of tomorrow.

The Superintendent invited principal leaders to introduce the following newly appointed school leaders:

- Marcia Riddick, Roger Clap Innovation School
- Michele Pellam, Another Course to College
- Tony King, Boston International Newcomers Academy

On May 31st, the School Committee and Superintendent will host the 18th annual BPS Valedictorians Luncheon at the Boston Harbor Hotel. Approximately 250 business, education and civic leaders, together with headmasters, teachers and parents, will salute the valedictorians of the Class of 2016. BPS valedictorians come from every corner of the city and all over the world. Many of them have truly incredible stories of academic success in the face of hardship. Many are low-income, and have overcome tremendous odds toward achieving their dreams. The event promised to be inspiring.

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The Superintendent invited parents, students, families and other community members to a BuildBPS Community Forum on Saturday, June 4, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Bolling Building. The Superintendent and city leaders will discuss how BuildBPS is helping to shape the future of the school district. They will share ideas about designing BPS schools and classrooms for 21st century teaching and learning; review preliminary findings from school building assessments that are already completed; understand how demographic projections may affect BPS enrollment and planning; and participate in small group discussions to learn more and ask questions about the 10-Year Educational and Facilities Master Plan.

The Superintendent is hosting a student budget forum on Tuesday, June 7th, in the School Committee chambers, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. It will be a great opportunity for students to learn more about the district's budget process and fiscal challenges, and to share their own ideas and concerns. BPS leadership will be on hand to field questions and address their concerns. Students and district leaders must continue working together to seek a shared understanding of the deeper issues facing our community, and find solutions.

On May 14th, the Boston Public Schools' Office of Special Education and the BPS STRIVE program (Supported Training to Reach Independence through Vocational Experiences) held their first Transition Conference for students with disabilities and their families to learn about options for post-secondary education. There were sessions in which participants learned about self-advocacy, transition assessments, post-secondary vocational training, and building a bridge between school and adult eligibility. The Superintendent thanked the Office of Special Education and STRIVE for hosting this event, calling it a great example of BPS becoming more inclusive, and providing pathways for the best possible outcomes for all of our students in college, career, and life.

On May 13th, several BPS middle and high school students presented civic advocacy projects at the State House as part of Civic Day, which is organized by Generation Citizen. Top prizes went to student teams from the Lyndon Pilot K-8 School and Excel High School. Brighton High School history teacher Paula Bowles was recognized with the "Change Maker" award, which is given every year to a teacher who has excelled at helping students become active citizens.

Today the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)'s Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve the Preferred Schematic Report for the proposed construction of a new Josiah Quincy Upper School Building. This approval allows BPS, with its colleagues in the Public Facilities Department, to continue to partner with the MSBA) through the design of this new, state-of-the-art facility. The estimated total project cost is \$114.5 million, and will receive upwards of 70 percent of eligible costs on the project. The Board also voted to approve five Accelerated Repair Projects, which will allow for necessary roof or boiler repairs.

Sunny Pai, the director of the Diploma Plus alternative education program at Charlestown High School, has been nominated to receive a \$100,000 award for the program. Mr. Pai is one of six educators from New England to be nominated for the Larry O'Toole Award through the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, which "honors an individual who has demonstrated great leadership in advancing student-centered learning." Mr. Pai and his team at Charlestown High are doing

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tremendous work with students using the competency-based learning approach to help teach students who have not succeeded in traditional academic pathways. The Superintendent encouraged everyone to vote for Mr. Pai at www.studentsatthecenterhub.org. Ms. Oliver-Dávila commented that she appreciates the district's efforts to hold race dialogues and engage in culturally sustaining practices.

Ms. Jeri Robinson said she joined several BPS staff in participating in a Summit on Race and Equity last week at Northeastern University. She congratulated Assistant Superintendent of Equity Becky Shuster and Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Dr. Colin Rose for their impressive presentations.

Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged BPS central staff participating in race dialogues to engage in courageous and uncomfortable conversations.

Mr. O'Neill requested an update from the district regarding the status of the Carter Development Center's application with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). He also asked the BPS communications team to put a link to the Larry O'Toole Award on the BPS website and Twitter account.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Marisol Negron, professor, UMass Boston, and parent, testified regarding the BPS water policy proposal.

Gena Mauuli, parent, Hernandez, testified regarding the BPS water policy proposal.

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, testified regarding the Massachusetts School Choice Plan.

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. O'Neill praised the students from the Community Academy of Science and Health who are planning a service-learning trip to Malawi and asked them to report back to School Committee about their experience.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, Committee unanimously approved grants totaling \$102,452.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international field trip for students and chaperones from Community Academy of Science and Health to travel to Malawi from July 24-August 6, 2016.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion for the District to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice Plan for the 2016-17 school year.

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Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to change the name of the William E. Carter Development Center to the William E. Carter School.

REPORTS

Updated Drinking Water Policy – Assistant Superintendent of Operations Kim Rice presented the Superintendent’s revised drinking water policy proposal, which she first presented on April 13, 2016. Ms. Rice was joined by John Sullivan, chief engineer for the Boston Water and Sewer Commission, and Dr. Huy Nguyen, medical director of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC).

Ms. Rice said the district’s recent testing of all schools with working water fountains – as opposed to the state requirements of only two schools per year – makes BPS a leader in the state. Under a current proposal, BPS plans to spend \$51,000 annually to test all schools with drinking water, as well as all water supplies serving school kitchens and school medical/health services.

The district will hold nine public meetings for the 10 impacted schools (Another Course to College and Boston Green Academy share a building) with water fountains that tests showed had elevated lead levels.

Highlights of the Updated Water Policy include:

- Testing all schools and increasing the district’s testing protocol to once a year.
- Integrated communications plan that provides access to data and resources in multiple languages.
- Hire an engineer to standardize testing, communications, and manage water policy implementation.

Mr. Sullivan, who is also the director of a national organization that represents the largest municipal water agencies in the country, praised the district’s efforts, calling Boston a leader. He explained that the 15 parts per billion action level is the number upon which more work has to be done, such as pipe replacement. He clarified that Flint, MI has not adopted 5 parts per billion action level. The district will turn off water access at a site if one drinking water fountain tests above the acceptable level.

Dr. Nguyen advised the School Committee that the BPHC is not recommending universal testing of all students because the risk of lead exposure from school drinking water is very low.

Additional information is available at www.bostonpublicschools.org/water.

Mr. Loconto praised the revised policy and asked about cost of various levels of water testing. He encouraged the district to consider revisiting testing procedures and protocols in the future and to examine costs implications.

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School Committee members asked questions about communication with students, staff and families, all of which were answered by the presenters.

Mr. O'Neill encouraged district leaders to coordinate with the BPHC to inform local pediatricians about recent drinking water issues in BPS. He also praised the BPS facilities team for meeting twice with the Citywide Parents Council, noting the proposed policy is now more family-friendly.

The Superintendent thanked Ms. Rice for her work as she prepares to transition out of BPS.

Preschool – Grade 2 Reform and Alignment: A Strong Start for Boston's Youth – Dr. Jason Sachs, executive director of Early Childhood, and Dr. Karla Estrada, deputy superintendent of Student Support Services and Special Education, delivered a presentation on the district's efforts to reform and align instruction for students in preschool through 2nd grade.

Dr. Estrada provided an overview of the district's direction in instructional practices, noting that literacy skills are critical to student success. She outlined the pedagogical mechanisms that support the work, and talked about the structural changes the district will undertake to make this happen. Dr. Sachs then reviewed the success of K1, both in terms of expansion and outcomes for students. He also discussed how the work is supporting K2 and first-grade design. Dr. Sachs said that data clearly demonstrates that investments in K1 education last with students well into 5th grade and beyond. He said the district's work is the focus of national studies tracking student development. He noted that the Eliot K-8 School was recently accredited by the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), considered a gold standard for early childhood education. About 70 percent of BPS programs for 4 and 5 year-olds are NAEYC accredited.

School Committee members applauded the district's early education efforts and asked a variety of questions about funding and sustaining this important work.

O'Neill encouraged the district to educate kindergarten teachers about the Boston Basics campaign, which centers around five evidence-based parenting and caregiving principles that encompass much of what experts find is important for children from birth to age three.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the correlation between early education investments and the closing achievement gaps. He encouraged the district to provide more data on gaps.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Tapia will graduate from Boston Latin Academy on June 12th.

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

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ADJOURN

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

Attest:

Elizabeth Sullivan

Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary